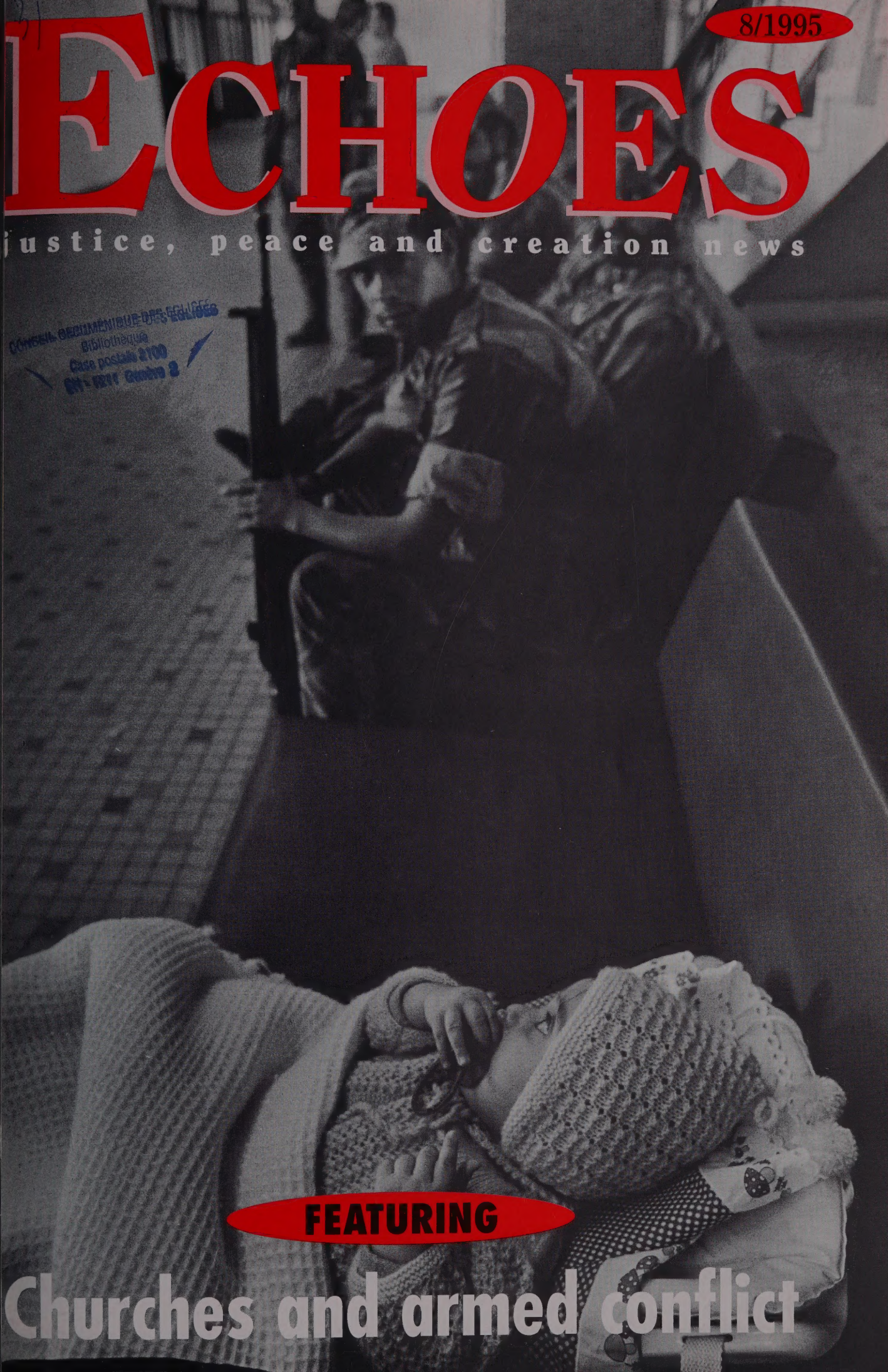
8/1995

ECHOES

justice, peace and creation news

CONSEIL OECUMENIQUE DES EGLISES
Bibliothèque
Case postale 2100
1211 GENEVE Genève 2



FEATURING

Churches and armed conflict

Echoes From Elsewhere

An Introduction To Echoes Magazine In Reactions, Facts and Issues From All Over The World

Violence against women facts and figures:

- In India, five women are burned in dowry-related disputes every day. Women's groups claim the figure is nearer 25.
- In the US, a women is beaten every 18 minutes. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury among women of reproductive age. Between 22% and 35% of women who visit emergency rooms are there for that reason.
- In Peru, 70% of all crimes reported to police are of women beaten by their husbands.
- As many as one hundred million women are "missing" in developing countries; in other words, normal mortality patterns are not present. The infanticide of baby girls and the nutritional neglect of girl children are blamed.

Source: The New Internationalist no. 270/August 1995.

The Costs and Benefits of War

There have been 148 wars in the world since the end of World War II, according to military analyst Ruth Sivard. If a war is defined as a conflict killing 1,000 people or more, there were 34 wars in the world in 1993, and about the same number last year, a large number of them going on simultaneously. It is generally known that the costs of even small wars can be staggering, often leaving the participating nations ravaged, though typically enriching certain industries and small factions, and providing geopolitical or financial benefits to outside parties willing to provide arms, training, or aid.

Yet, while most military antagonists may be astute appraisers of the costs of weapons, vehicles, and other military line items, few have any idea of the overall costs of wars; as though wars were not matters over which participants have any choice, and must be fought regardless of cost.

Now, a report just released in the United Kingdom provides what is believed to be the first comprehensive assessment of the costs and benefits of war. The results make it clear that there are indeed choices and that alternative courses may sometimes achieve desired outcomes at far less cost or with far greater benefit.

The True Costs of Conflict, published by the London-based organisation Saferworld in collaboration with six international organisations, offers assessments of seven major conflicts: East Timor (1975), Ex-Yugoslavia (1989), Iraq (1990), Kashmir (1989), Mozambique (1980-1992), and Sudan (1983). The seven were chosen to represent the different kinds of conflict that commonly occur, from wars between nations to guerilla campaigns.

The case study of East Timor, for example, tracks the costs both to East Timor, which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975, and to the invading country. Some of the costs are computed in social terms; more than one-third of the entire Timorese population killed, infant mortality elevated to the highest rate in the world, 400 schools destroyed, and nearly all the teachers executed.

The costs have also been quantified economically. After the invasion, agricultural output fell by almost 70 percent in just three years. Private investment disappeared, and since the invasion "there has not been a single U.S. dollar of foreign investment in East Timor".

For Indonesia, direct expenditures are estimated to have reached $1 million to $3 million per day over the past 20 years. In addition, since the early 1980s, Indonesia has spent hundreds of millions on "social development", emphasizing "Indonisation" of the Timorese yet this effort has failed abjectly. These are heavy costs for a country with one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world. But much of the expense was born by the United States which has strategic military and oil interests in the region.

The benefits to Indonesia included the apparent obliteration of communism on its islands, enrichment of the country's ruling elite through the rise of military monopolies, and strengthened control of major sea routes between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, which "guaranteed it favorable relations with the United States, since continued good relations between the [United States] and Indonesia were seen as essential to the American South East Asia strategy". Yet, despite the investment of billions of dollars, the report notes that "little concrete benefit has accrued to Indonesia as a whole". Meanwhile, the annexed population remains impoverished and alienated.

Similarly, for each of the other conflicts studied, the report suggests that the benefits expected from investments in war may be more heavily offset by costs than has been widely believed.

By Ed Ayres in World Watch, January/February 1995.

Table of Contents

Editorial	3
The Power of the Peacemakers	5
The United Nations and Human Security	8
Churches and Armed Conflict	12
After the War...	16
A Holistic View of Violence	18
Peace and Democracy in Guatemala	23
Prayer	27
The Barricade	28
The IVth UN World Conference on Women	32
WCC Central Committee '95	36
Staff presentations	38
Publications	39

A Steward Application Form for the 1997 WCC Central Committee is inserted in the middle of the Magazine.

E d i t o r i a l

Echoes
justice, peace and creation news

Echoes is an occasional publication of the World Council of Churches' Programme Unit III on Justice, Peace and Creation.
It is intended to share information and insights on the concerns of the Unit.
This journal replaces: "Women in a changing world", "Youth", "CCPD: for a change", "Link", "Church and Society Newsletter" and "Forum".

Publisher:
The Executive Director of Unit III

Publications Staff Team:
Susie Kankolongo
Anu Talvivaara
Bob Scott

Layout and Design:
Edwin Hassink, WCC

Printed on environmentally friendly paper by the PrintShop of the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva

Coverphoto: Salgado Jr.

Articles for future publication are welcome.

Articles published in ECHOES are WCC copyright, however permission will be granted to reproduce most material on application.

All correspondence and inquiries should be directed to:

Programme Unit III Publications
World Council of Churches
P.O.Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland

Telephone: 022 - 791 61 11
Telefax: 022 - 791 03 61
Telex: 415 730 OIK CH
Cable: OIKOUMENE GENEVA

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

by Janice Love

For centuries, churches and Christians have vigorously debated and refined the criteria to judge just and unjust wars. In more recent times, activists and theologians extended the same basic framework and discussion to questions of just and unjust revolutions as well as just and unjust interventions. Meanwhile, throughout much of the history of the church, pacifists challenged us to focus our attention more widely to examine the injustice of all aspects of violence. With a seemingly relentless parade of wars, revolutions, revolts, rapes, assassinations, criminal behaviour and many other forms of violence, our experience should now be sufficient and our discussions deep enough to draw clear conclusions about the efficacy and ethics of using violence. History certainly provides plenty of lessons against which we can match our carefully developed criteria.

Yet recent events demonstrate that we remain confused and divided. Our measures for just and unjust war are of little more use to us now than they have ever been. In the midst of life-threatening situations that extend from the local to the global, a collective application of clear criteria for Christian judgements about the use of violence alludes us. In the meantime, more people suffer, and the death toll rises.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the average number of annual war deaths in the second half of the twentieth century is more than double that of the nineteenth century, and seven times greater than in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, more than 92 percent of all conflicts since World War II occurred in the South.

If we add data from the United Nations on other forms of violence, particularly the slower forms of violence caused by social, economic or political structures, we stagger under the burden of a global culture of death. For example, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing focused attention on violence against women. Three to four million women are battered each year worldwide. Battered women are 12 times more likely to commit suicide than other women. One in six women are victims of rape in industrialized countries. One-fifth to one half of all women across the world experience some degree of domestic violence during marriage.

Violence against women illustrates a form of structural conflict (resulting in part from the subordination of women) that receives little attention from churches. Few Christian ethicists, for example, have debated the relative justice of women physically defending themselves against their attackers. Rather, most churches and pastors either ignore the problem or counsel women to endure the attacks, in many cases because the abuser is her husband or father. Therefore, in this type of violence, the church and some of its traditions and doctrines, usually make the conflict worse. Some church officials have even condoned husbands beating their wives as appropriate punishment for some offenses. Therefore, instead of weighing the relative merits of a woman using force to defend herself and advocating such, the church often chooses to send her back for more abuse.

Would this be the appropriate time, therefore, to apply criteria for the just use of violence by women against those men who attack them, who batter or rape them? Since we regularly uphold the rights of nations, communities and individuals to defend themselves against aggression, should churches be advocates for training women in physical self-defense to protect themselves from domestic violence? Maybe, maybe not.

However we answer these questions and others like them, I believe the questions themselves begin to reveal the narrow intellectual and theological boundaries of our understanding of peace. These questions illustrate the conceptual frameworks that often trap us. Most of us in the Christian family have developed fairly small uncreative repertoires of response to violence. We tend to think in terms of reactive defense rather

continue on page 4

continued from page 1

than pro-active prevention, and despite our rhetoric to the contrary, we often fail to understand how genuine peace is intimately linked to justice. No matter what our theological attachments, we seem to prefer debating the relative merits of violence and non-violence, or the relative justice of particular acts of violence or warfare, to the more difficult work of figuring out how to build homes, communities, nations and international organisations that enhance the possibilities of peace with justice.

The Programme to Overcome Violence (POV), initiated by the WCC Central Committee in 1994, seeks to shift the terms of debate and widen the Christian repertoire of response to violence. In the words of the Programme's Working Principles, the POV aspires to contribute to the de-legitimization of war and violence and to the promotion of peace with justice in homes, churches and societies as well as in global political and economic structures; ... to equip the churches better for resolving violent conflicts and for managing and mediating disputes that threaten to become violent; to encourage churches to place a priority on addressing violence in their own societies, as well as the violence their cultures and nations impose on others, focusing on structures and root causes...

The programme seeks to gather lessons from those churches deeply engaged in creative work for peace with justice, to help share this experience among those churches seeking to broaden and deepen their engagement, and to challenge those churches that remain complacent about, or complicit in, injustice and violence.

To use the issue of violence against women as illustration again, the POV, in conjunction with the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, might promote networking among programmes that teach families, in ways appropriate to their culture, how to cope creatively (rather than destructively) with conflicts, emphasizing to men and boys that beating or raping women and children is always unacceptable. Programmes that address this issue often also provide support services specifically for women who seek alternatives to the violence in their homes, a vital dimension of helping families learn new patterns of life-affirming relationships that do not depend on the subordination of women.

Other issues could illustrate the point equally well. Why did we as churches a few years ago ignore early warnings about the conflict ready to explode in the former Yugoslavia? After the war commenced, many Christians began the inevitable debate about what form a violent response by the international community should take in order to fit just war (or in this case, just intervention) criteria. Once again, in our intellectual and theological frameworks, the contemplation of violent reaction substituted for pro-active prevention. Meanwhile, churches from many sides blamed each other for not making a more prophetic witness for peace against their own governments, some of which are direct parties to the conflict, while others sit back and supply the weapons.

If prevention and early warning have a chance, fundamental questions about the relationship of peace and justice must be tackled. Why, for example, in discussions of national security, do Christians often get drawn into debates on how many and what kinds of weapons or armed forces are appropriate? Why do we not insist instead on redefining national security to include not only appropriate policies for defense against outside aggressors (which most countries rarely experience) but also economic security for families and communities, environmental security, political processes which allow for genuine participation of all citizens, and training for children (and many adults!) in culturally appropriate mechanisms to manage the conflicts that inevitably arise throughout life.

The cry for a Programme to Overcome Violence comes from churches immersed in societies full of violence as well as from churches deeply frustrated by the recent carnage of wars in various parts of the world. We need new models as well as renewed vigour for useful old models that move churches into a more active witness for peace with justice. We need creative mechanisms of mutual accountability and mutual support among churches struggling with these issues. We need to shift our focus of attention way from debating the relative merits and ethics of violence to its active prevention.

The Programme to Overcome Violence provides opportunity to pursue these possibilities, if churches will begin to do more to give peace a chance.

Dr Janice Love is an Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina. She is a member of the WCC Central Committee, Unit III Commission and chairs the WCC Board on International Affairs of Unit III.

"Why did we as churches a few years ago ignore early warnings about the conflict ready to explode in the former Yugoslavia?"

The power of the peace-makers is still in its infancy

The worldwide Programme to Overcome Violence: how the ecumenical umbrella organization is preparing to become a community of hope.
It was one of those historic moments. Yet the participants did come away with a stirring impression: of somehow being filled with the creativity and power of the Holy Spirit. Margot Kaessmann, General Secretary of the German Protestant Kirchentag, an ecumenical specialist of international renown and German delegate to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), is a level-headed, critical Protestant, adverse to any form of exaltation. Yet when she relates how in one of the poor Black churches of Johannesburg the idea of a worldwide WCC "Programme to Overcome Violence" came to life, this sober political theologian speaks in terms of God's Holy Spirit.

It was the end of January 1994 at the opening worship service of the meeting of the WCC Central Committee in Johannesburg. For the first time since 1968, when the apartheid regime had expelled the WCC from the country on account of its ecumenical programme to combat racism, the world church community was able to meet again in South Africa. Because of its theological criticism of racial tyranny, the WCC was declared an enemy of the apartheid regime at the end of the 1960s. Some 25 years on, when the WCC was again able to go to Johannesburg, there remained but a few short, violence-ridden weeks to the triumph of Nelson Mandela in the country's first democratic elections. The South African hosts celebrated a worship service of great hope with their guests from all over the world. In his opening sermon, the Black Methodist Bishop, Stanley Mogoba, thanked the WCC for its solidarity through its once highly controversial programme to combat racism. It had enabled solidarity groups and many church leaders to make decisive contributions towards branding White racial tyranny as a sin and towards overcoming it. Yet Bishop Mogoba did not only look back. He threw open to the world church community a prophetic, forward-looking perspective: just as the church community's programme to combat racism had helped to overcome the violence of apartheid in southern Africa, churches throughout the world now faced the task of defeating the tyranny of violence worldwide. The very moving expression of gratitude by Bishop Mogoba for solidarity in the anti-apartheid struggle thus became the starting point for the church community's worldwide "Programme to Overcome Violence".

This spontaneous idea marked the end of a difficult phase of disunity within the WCC fellowship; for at the beginning of 1991, during the Gulf War waged by the allied forces against the Iraqi aggressor, the hitherto unanimous rejection of war was finally broken. At that time, the meeting of the WCC Assembly in the Australian capital Canberra had brought sharply into focus differences of opinion that could not be patched up with empty phrases.

Already during the period of East-West nuclear confrontation the church community had stated and repeatedly reaffirmed its unconditional rejection of modern warfare. Yet, the complete and surprising collapse of the East Bloc meant that the world situation, up to then clearly defined, became unpredictable. Suddenly, it was no longer a matter of East-West proxy wars that were easy to recognize and condemn. National, religious-confessional wars erupted just as they had in the early part of the twentieth century; they were conducted with conventional weapons, without regard for losses, fired by intense hatred. And at the same time, many churches belonging to the WCC, for instance the Lutheran World Federation or the Anglican communion, surprisingly began reviving the question as to whether war was not justifiable under certain circumstances. Or even worse, some, such as the Orthodox in Serbia or in Armenia, justified so-called "just wars" waged by their nation against people of other faiths.

"The WCC Programme to Overcome Violence therefore had inauspicious beginnings", says Margot Kaessmann, a German member of the WCC Central Committee. In regard to the de facto situations of injustice and violence in all continents, and the resulting division within the community of church-

es and religions, the WCC should not deceive itself with flowery but meaningless theological statements. On the contrary, with the Programme to Overcome Violence the church community was embarking upon a conflict-ridden path. It was facing up to its political responsibility for the future of humankind.

The first disagreements on this uncharted path have already been resolved. Bishop Mogoba had suggested in Johannesburg the expression "to combat violence", in other words, combatting unjust violence. This anti-imperialist orientation in the Johannesburg deliberations of WCC delegates was discarded as being too narrow, and replaced by the more broadly formulated and more binding "Programme to Overcome Violence". Yet even this title is not sufficiently clear in the German formulation. Does it mean that even legitimate, democratically regulated "violence" on the part of a constitutional State or the United Nations peace-keeping forces should be challenged? This was a question posed by concerned Protestants from German-speaking countries. "No", says Margot Kaessmann. In English, the WCC's first working language, the word "violence" is applied to the rule of force and to acts of violence, while legitimate violence, that exercised by the constitutional State is described by the word "power". Controlled power for example, United Nations peace-keeping missions is necessary to stem violence.

Nor did the WCC wish to focus exclusively on the violence of war among States. The fellowship of churches is keen "to give up any theological or other justification of the use of military power, and to become a koinonia dedicated to the pursuit of a just peace". The WCC describes its own political task for the future with a quotation from the "Conciliar Process for Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation", the call made by the ecumenical world gathering in Seoul in 1990: a "culture of non-violence"

rando neves-it / wcc

should be fostered worldwide. In all of this the WCC is aiming less at the theory, than at concrete everyday politics. WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser puts it this way: "The challenge to eliminate the institution of war has been on the agenda since the very beginnings of the ecumenical movement in our century. Yet today it is not a matter of pacifism as a moral principle, but rather a question of effectively overcoming violence and warfare out of political responsibility".

Does the process for overcoming violence exist only on paper? "Certainly not", says Margot Kaessmann. She does, however, admit that in Germany the igniting spark, the enthusiasm is still lacking and is proving difficult to kindle. "Naturally, the programme to combat racism had a similar experience. At the time the Evangelical Women's Federation had 'had a brainwave' and with their "anti-apartheid fruit boycott", ... "enabled every woman and every man to participate" in the programme to combat racism.

Up to the time of the first review in May 1995, the World Council was and still is engaged in hearings and orientation work worldwide in connection with the Programme to Overcome Violence. In 1994 therefore, the WCC brought together at the Corrymeela Ecumenical Peace Centre in Northern Ireland, at Bossey just outside Geneva and in Kitwe in Zambia, East African Christian men and women who had been active for years as peace practitioners at different levels, to share their experiences and analyses.

The advice emerging from Kitwe was: the Programme should not be informed by the often paralysing debate about Christian perspectives on legitimate violence or non-violence. The Kitwe report states: "Rather we want to focus on building and rebuilding communities of justice, peace and ecological sustainability at local, national and international levels. Together with the churches we want to start afresh with new and renewed vision, analysis and methods for a just peace". This also entails specifically the delegitimization of war and violence, training in and spirituality of non-violent conflict resolution, self-critical identification of daily violence and of cultural domination of others by the churches themselves.

The second WCC consultation in Corrymeela in Northern Ireland ended in the summer of 1994 on a note of confidence, for it had emerged that there were enough local human resources working for peace everywhere and these should be stimulated, strengthened and networked with one another. The World Council must support such "Confessing Groups", giving them a hearing, if necessary even against the will of the church establishments that are in collusion with those in political power. At the same time, the Corrymeela Consultation also underlined the danger of excessive outside presence and domination by well-meaning foreign and specifically western peace services. It is not a matter of western quick-fixes but, in eastern Europe or in Africa, of long-term processes of co-operation and rebuilding of outwardly and inwardly disrupted societies, of confidence-building and reconciliation, using approaches tailored to the local context and firmly rooted in the local culture. The main tasks of the Programme to Overcome Violence were set out in Corrymeela as follows: the theological focus should seek to link contextual, peace and liberation theology approaches with a "theology of life".

In political terms, it means participatory democracy to secure human rights and justice in the economy for all, and in order that the erstwhile oppressed do not become oppressors.

In terms of education, the operative concept is the Latin word educare, or "bringing out that which is within a person": awareness of our common humanity and orientation to service through training in listening, negotiation, civic courage, conflict resolution or group dynamics. The Corrymeela Consultation concluded: "The emphasis of a WCC effort should be to listen, identify, challenge, stimulate, link and help sustain local, regional and national church initiatives".

The worldwide WCC "Programme to Overcome Violence" has set itself a major, largely unpredictable task. It is now only one year old, and has hardly started to take shape. It is still in its infancy. The programme is still encountering difficulty in being seriously taken up by many WCC churches. Yet, if one takes the trouble to look carefully, the first contours are discernible. It is "from below", by "non-violent" means, and "via the conflict-ridden path to reconciliation" that Christians and churches will overcome unjust violence by small steps and wherever possible.

Thomas Seiterich-Kreuzkamp

First published in Publik Forum, Germany. Reprinted with kind permission.

Translated from the German Language Service, WCC

caption with the picture: "It is necessary to work with the respect of human rights and justice in the economy for all, in order that the erstwhile oppressed do not become the oppressors."

The United Nations and "Human Security"

by Ninan Koshy

In the determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", the aims of the UN were clearly defined in the Charter both "to unite our strengths to maintain international peace and security" and "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples", thus conceding if not underlining the link between violence caused by arms and the violence of social and economic structures.

We are at a strange moment of transition in the evolution of the United Nations' system. The rediscovery of the UN is indeed genuine, but it still involves flawed perceptions.

As Erskine B. Childers points out "The first weakness was obviously the founders' premise that the world was to be policed by the major powers, working together in the Security Council. Here, however, we have the first of many strange paradoxes. Those who drafted the Charter did not know of the achievement of atomic fission, and they signed it just before the first atomic bomb was dropped. This instantly lit the fuse of the future "Cold War", but the founders had written into the Charter optimism about arms regulation, even the concept of a link between arms and development".[1]

One of the main problems about the transition is the UN's apparent reluctance or inability to revise its perceptions and redefine its concept of peace and security to meet the challenges of the "new world disorder".

There is both a rediscovery and restructuring of the United Nations going on.
Six years ago Gro Harlem Brundtland in her address to the United Nations' General Assembly said that "the international community is rediscovering the United Nations, how indispensable it is and how useful it can be provided nations furnish it with the means to function as required".
There is already a process of restructuring. While the open discussions about restructuring centre around the expansion of the Security Council with the definite but narrow objective of the Western countries to add Germany and Japan as permanent members to reinforce Western dominance, there is a subtle restructuring which has legitimised the role usurped by the Bretton Woods institutions in the economic field. Unfortunately the kind of reforms required to meet the challenges of the new era are only on the periphery of discussions.

We now face a potentially far broader construct of "security" than just the elimination of organized military conflict between nation-states. In turn the definition of peace keeping may also become far broader than before. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have for many years been urging that world hunger, which still entraps around one billion people, should be considered a security threat. Of course this was something the founders of the UN could not have begun to imagine at a time when such problems were considered to be under the "domestic jurisdiction" of states. While economic growth world-wide has improved standards of living, it has also brought into sharper and alarming focus the disparities in wealth between nations and within nations. The global market bypasses people in abject poverty. The exclusion and exploitation of people by globalisation has only strengthened structures of injustice. The violence embedded in this situation and the increasing threat it poses to peace and security cannot be ignored.

As the Report of the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations says, "Security in 1995 and the years beyond has assumed dimensions not foreseen in 1945. While the threat of one country against another has not disappeared, the sources and manifestations of conflict are changing. Struggles within states involving civil wars, local insurrections or ethnic violence far outnumber those stemming from external violence or conflicts between states". [2]

Even this thoughtful Report does not sufficiently emphasise the structural violence reflected in poverty and violation of human rights, which unfortunately is reinforced by the policies of major powers.

More than two years ago, the "Economist" wrote, "The Securi-

ty Council is absurdly anachronistic. Many of the UN's 183 members feel alienated by the Council which, since the end of the Cold War, has been dominated by the Western three. (Russia has been preoccupied with domestic matters; China is not generally concerned with faraway places). The Security Council, says its harshest critics, has become little more than an extra-arm of Western foreign policy".[3]

But it is a Western foreign policy increasingly fashioned to support a "global governance" the main objective of which is to "promote dynamic open free markets", mainly for the benefit of the rich.

After World War II the US and the victorious allies continued to control the commanding heights of the world economy, using the new Bretton Woods institutions of the World Bank and IMF whose weighted-voting governance gave them decisive control. In the last decade the Western powers have intensified their use of the BWIs (supposedly agencies of the UN) as active enforcers of their policy.

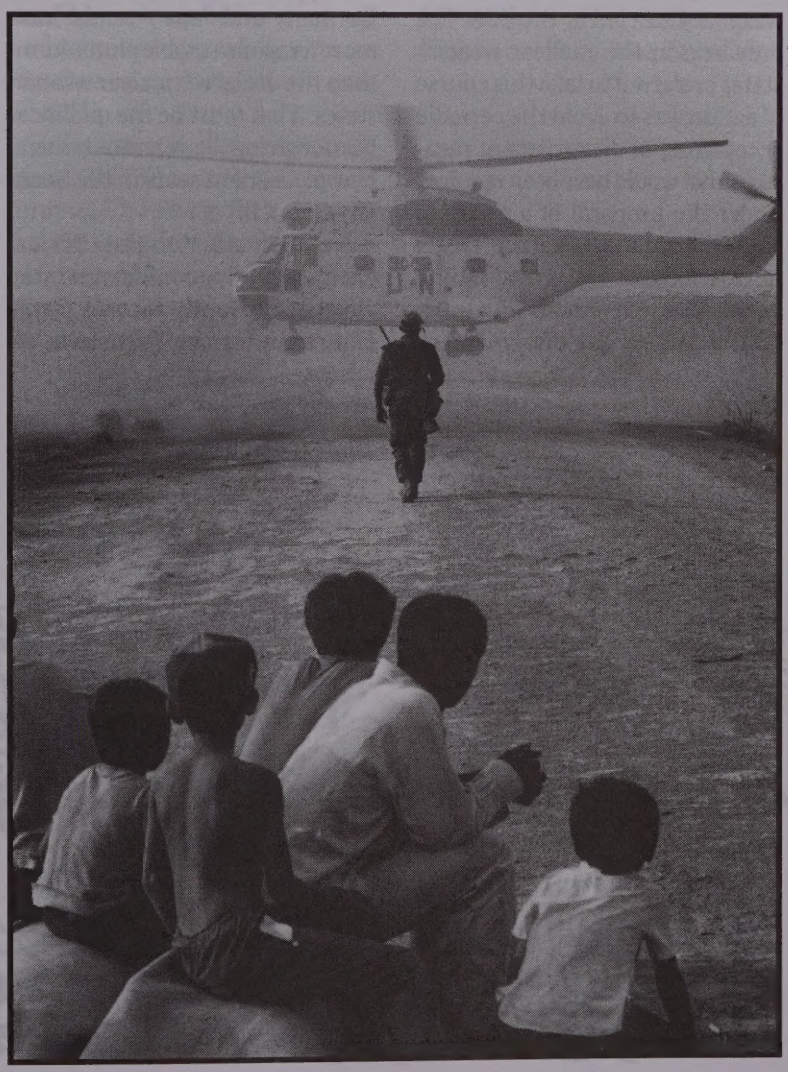
The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, in March 1995, gave blessings to the political and economic philosophy which rose to prominence in the 1980s through the BWIs and came to be known as the "Washington Consensus". The Copenhagen document accepted as its basic programme Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) at the national level.

At the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing (September 1995) the President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, admitted that "errors have been committed in structural adjustment programmes". He had to make that admission in the light of experiential evidence of the harmful effects of SAPs including "feminisation of poverty". What the World Bank President called "errors" have resulted in starvation, deaths, poverty, massive displacement of people, increase in unemployment and gross neglect of health and education in many countries. On the whole the inequitable and unfair SAPs have reinforced and accentuated structural violence in many countries. SAPs have the blessings of the UN.

It was Wolfensohn himself, outwardly penitent at Beijing, who had dashed all hopes of any coordination of policies by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as mandated by the Charter. At the last meeting of the ECOSOC (Geneva, June-July 1995) during the high level "policy dialogue" Wolfensohn responded to the discussion of the Summit for Social Development follow-up. He was described as "blunt to the point of being rude", declaring that he had no intention of being "coordinated by you or anyone else". This shows how the UN, by allowing the World Bank and IMF to pursue policies without any accountability, is actually aiding and abetting structural violence.

The profoundly damaging structural flaws that the North has maintained in the world economic system on an ascending scale and now legitimised by the UN, make humanitarian crises virtually inevitable.

The UN Secretary-General's Report to last year's General Assembly on "Agenda for Development" clearly stated that "little of the peace dividend appears to have been channelled into development". After pointing out new dimensions of arms trade and proliferation, in



unhcr/l. guest

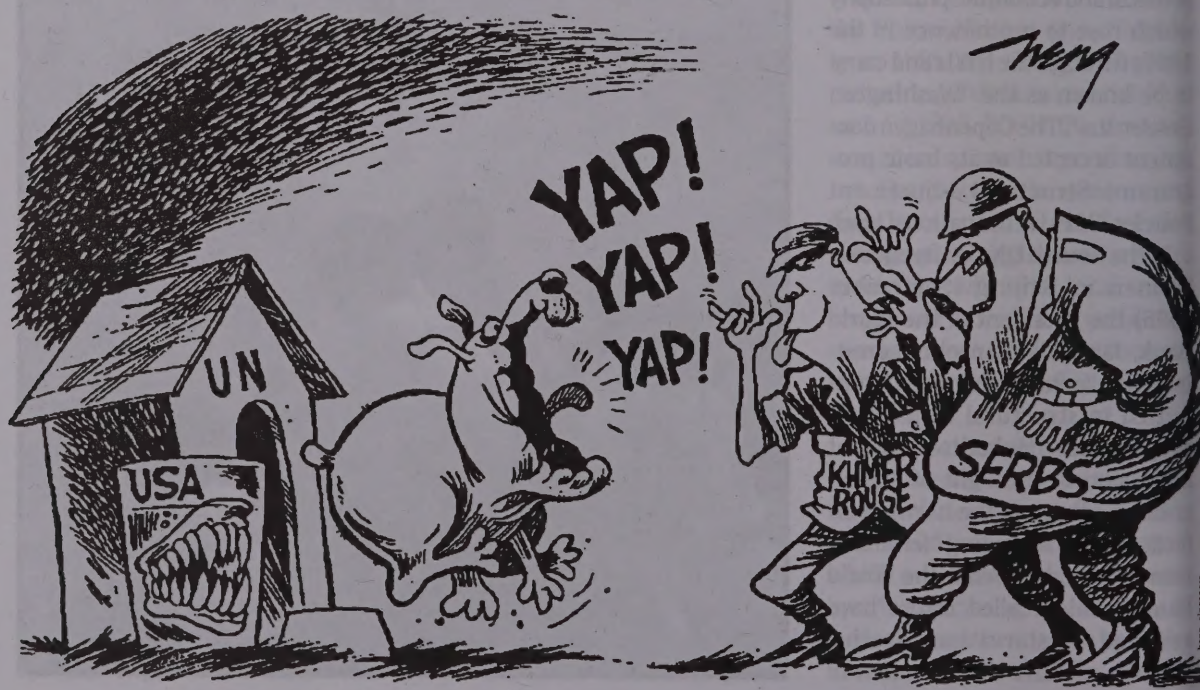
one of his forthright statements he said, "Paradoxically those expressing great concern over the rising stocks of arms worldwide are also the source of that phenomenon. The five permanent members of the Security Council account for 86 percent of the arms supplies now flowing to the countries of the world." These are the powers that are entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

The manner in which the Non-Proliferation Treaty was given an indefinite extension and the motive behind it also erode the credibility of these very same powers who permanently sit in the Security Council on "nuclear armchairs". The decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely was taken under intense pressure from the nuclear weapon states led by the USA. The only reason the nuclear weapon states preferred to take this course of action was to avoid the periodic accounting of disarmament measures that would have been required under the proposal of a group of Non-Aligned states that the Treaty be extended for automatic rolling twenty-five year periods with time-bound targets for disarmament leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapon states. The nuclear weapon states – read permanent members of the Security Council – who gave every indication during the review process that they did not intend to give up their privileged status were firmly opposed to any commitment on disarmament measures. Even before the ink of the decision on the extension of the Treaty was dry two permanent members of the Security Council, China and France, conducted nuclear tests. The French tests are particularly deplorable with the obscene colonial arrogance they represent. As a Greenpeace spokesman, Shawn Burnie, pointed out, there was a strategic alliance between Germany and Japan and the nuclear weapon states. By the year 2000, he said, Germany and Japan would have more weapons – usable plutonium – than the declared nuclear weapon states. That must be the qualification for giving them, and only them, new permanent seats in the Security Council.

Any discussion on the UN's capacity to resolve conflicts and stop violence currently focuses on its failures in former Yugoslavia. As Richard Falk comments "No matter how favourably its relief effort is assessed, the overall role of the United Nations in Bosnia is properly perceived as a failure in relation to the central challenges of "ethnic cleansing" and Serbian accountability. Such a UN failure should not be surprising given the absence for leading states, especially the United States, of perceived strategic interests at stake in Bosnia".[4]

Falk points out two components of this failure: the Security Council has operated throughout the existence of the UN as an instrument of geopolitics (that is, the policies of the dominant states); humanitarian concerns, including the prevention of genocide, have never, on their own, been perceived as geopolitically significant.[5]

The Yugoslav crisis emerged just as the European nations and the United States were arguing over the future of the Western Security system. The result was the morass of uncoordinated initiatives by the powers in Yugoslavia through the UN, EU, CSCE, NATO and unilaterally by some powers, while keeping the UN forces on the ground abjectly impotent in the face of Ser-



bian actions. The Yugoslav wars grew in intensity and complexity because the Europeans were making policy without military instruments to do so, while the US, which did possess the military instruments, was out of decision-making until a late stage. The United Nations was at various stages used to legitimise actions initiated by some powers.

The UN has maintained that its humanitarian objectives in Bosnia have on the whole been attained. This raises the conceptual problem with regard to humanitarian and strategic interests. Ethnic cleansing and the massive outflow of refugees, with all the problems raised thereby, are demanding a more strategic appreciation of the relevance of unresolved humanitarian tragedies, thereby blurring the boundary between humanitarian and the strategic.

Rather than coming to grips with this new strategic dimension, the UN allows itself to be used to legitimise the old geopolitical idea of spheres of influence as the recent role of France in Rwanda, the Russian role in the "near abroad" and the US role in Haiti suggest. This unilateralism, often with the benefit of the fig leaf of UN colours, is against the grain of collective security that the UN is supposed to be all about.

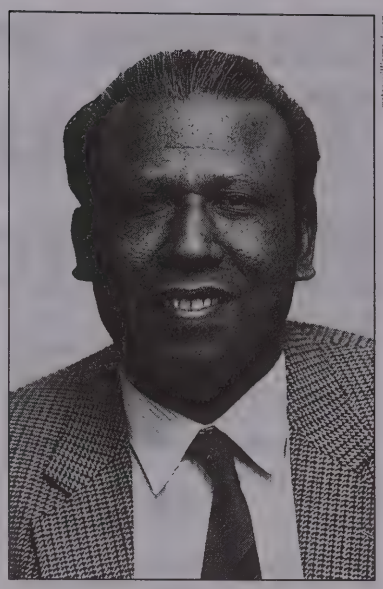
A very pertinent observation made by Henry Kissinger in his recent book "Diplomacy" is highly relevant here.[6]

"America was able to invoke the authority of the UN against North Korean aggression in 1950 only because the Soviet representative was boycotting the Security Council and the General Assembly was still dominated by countries eager to enlist America against the threat of Soviet aggression in Europe... But the UN failed to fulfil the underlying promise of collective security.

"This has been true of the UN even in the post Cold War period. In the Gulf War of 1991 it did indeed ratify American action, but resistance to Iraqi aggression was hardly an application of the doctrine of collective security. Not waiting for an international consensus, the US had unilaterally dispatched a large expeditionary force. Other nations could gain influence over America's action only by joining what was in effect an American enterprise."

That is why the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations envisages a reformed UN, "To provide states and people with security from violence and disorder, the present improvised approaches will be made more systematic. The separate functions of an enhanced UN system peacekeeping and conflict resolution, human rights, social and economic development, peace-building will be better integrated to achieve "human security" for all peoples".[7]

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the much debated reform will be along such lines. In fact the dominant powers want to maintain old concepts of security which serve their interests.



peter williams / wcc

Ninan Koshy is former director of the Commission of Churches in International Affairs of the WCC. He is presently a free-lance journalist in Kerala, India, and lecturer in Human Rights and Religious Freedom.

[1]. Erskine B. Childers, "The Future of the United Nations", Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 143.

[2]. "The United Nations in its Second Half Century", Report of the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations, Ford Foundation, New York, 1995, p. 12.

[3]. "The Economist", 12 June 1993, p. 22.

[4]. Richard Falk, "The Lessons of Bosnia", Balkan War Report, London, Issue 28, Sept. 1994.

[5]. Ibid.

[6]. Henry Kissinger, "Diplomacy", Simon and Schuster, New York, 1995, pp. 249-250.

[7]. "The United Nations in its Second Half Century", p. 7.

Churches and armed conflict
To study war no more?

by Roger Williamson

The first General Secretary, Visser't Hooft describes in his Memoirs how, as a comparatively young ecumenist at the 1937 Oxford Conference, he had to act as secretary to a group working on the issue of war and peace. In his group, he recalls, were three leading British advocates of the three main positions on the issue a consistent pacifist, an advocate of the League of Nations and peace through international law and understanding, and the (then) Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who argued that regrettably there were times when nations had to go to war.[1] Elsewhere in his autobiography, he discusses the right of resistance, drawing parallels between Dutch resistance against the Spaniards and three hundred years later the involvement of his friend Bonhoeffer in a plot to kill Hitler, and the decision of Eduardo Mondlane of Mozambique to engage in armed struggle against the Portuguese colonialists.[2] Here, in effect, are still the key positions, although the advent of weapons of mass destruction has complicated the issue further.

Fifty Years On

This is a year of many 50th anniversaries – including the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Stuttgart Declaration and the re-admission of the German churches to the ecumenical family, the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and of the foundation of the United Nations. The Biblical theme of "Jubilee" has found a resonance as we look towards the 50th anniversary of the World Council of Churches and the Harare Assembly of 1998. In this context, Konrad Raiser, the General Secretary has written to the WCC member churches as follows:

The Amsterdam Assembly stated unequivocally that "war as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man." Might such tragedies as we are witnessing today in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina could have been avoided if the churches had fully accepted this insight and proclaimed its implications more insistently, rejecting the idea that the resolution of any dispute requires the defeat, subjection and humiliation of one side by the other?

It is true that churches have sometimes been ready to speak out against war. Already in October 1945, the Evangelical Church in Germany, recalling its struggle against "the National Socialist regime of violence", declared; "we accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently". Later the United Church of Christ in Japan issued its own "Confession of Responsibility for World War II". On several other occasions during the past fifty years, churches have protested their country's military engagements, sometimes eliciting sharp opposition from their own members as well as the government. Yet if we ask whether we as Christians have indeed said a firm and convincing No to the logic of war and Yes to the love of Christ and the justice of the God of history, it is clear that we, like our ecumenical forebears in Amsterdam, still have much to confess. This anniversary year provides us with an opportunity to do so.[3]

While rhetorically impressive, this passage does not provide a clear indication of the future direction for an ecumenical peace ethic. It is by no means clear that reference to God's justice in history requires all rejection of armed force. Many are looking to the UN to use force in situations such as Rwanda and Bosnia. Hatred of violence may still require the use of force or threat of force to protect the vulnerable. Bonhoeffer's paradoxical position still confronts us. Commitment to peace may, in extremis, point to the threat or use of force (albeit by the UN) for the protection of innocent life.

The Programme to Overcome Violence

The World Council of Churches, at its Central Committee Meeting in Johannesburg in January 1994 announced its intention to carry out a "Programme to Overcome Violence", but the programme, as yet, remains rather unfocused. One of the questions which has to be addressed is how to help to move the churches beyond being chaplains to their own side in conflict. This article is a contribution to the debate on how churches can help to "overcome", the institution of war.

Given the size of the churches and the explicit understanding of the Christian message as a gospel of peace, it is surprisingly hard to find examples of churches actually making or negotiating peace. Recent significant examples include the World Council of Churches and the All-Africa Conference of Churches facilitating an end to the Sudan Civil War (1955-72) although this broke out again just over a decade later and continues to this day;[4] the Pope helping to avert war over the Beagle Channel between Chile and Argentina. The work of the churches in peace processes such as those in Mozambique and Central America should also be mentioned. In spite of the recent book edited by Douglas Johnstone and Cynthia Sampson, religion is still the "missing dimension of statecraft" and often serves to exacerbate rather than end conflict. Too often, churches (and indeed other religious bodies) end up as chaplains to their own side, not as bridge-building and reconciling forces. As WCC deputy General Secretary, Wesley Ariarajah, has stressed, if the contacts with the other community are not already strong long before the killing starts, it is hard for religious leaders to play an effective reconciling role.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, it has become clear that what we have is not a New World Order, but a global North-South divide and a world of internal conflicts a crisis of the nation state. Hugh McCullum's book on Rwanda, The Angels Have Left Us, gives a sobering account of the failure of the churches to prevent genocide. Statements by Serbian and Croatian church leaders reflect the political divisions in former Yugoslavia and external ecumenical efforts have been no more successful than diplomatic efforts by the international community in bringing peace any nearer. The European churches are planning a major assembly on reconciliation in 1997 and the secular media will undoubtedly use former Yugoslavia as a criterion by which to measure the seriousness of our efforts.

Given the persistence of "wars and rumours of war" we need to hear the warnings of experts such as Lawrence Freedman, Professor of War Studies at King's College, London who has written:

As the cold war closed, commentators spoke of a period of transition to a new international order, as stable as before but somehow more just. It was presumed that things would settle down for the foreseeable future. But in a state system so complex and diverse, and with such inequalities in wealth and territory, stability is no more than a fond hope. Things will never settle down, and that is why we are unlikely to be able to stop worrying about war.[5]

Elements of a Five-Year Programme on "Churches and Conflict" (1995-2000)

I want to try to outline a 5-year Programme on "Churches and Conflict" or, in more dramatic theological terms, a "Peace Jubilee" plan for the churches to work on, leading up to the new Millennium. It is a personal list and will no doubt change. Others will give other priorities, but trying to formulate what needs to be done shows the extent of the task. For reasons of convenience, I have concentrated on the "software" the ideologies, issues and situations of conflict. To give a more complete picture, a further list would be required relating to "hardware" (nuclear testing, landmines, arms control, curbing the arms trade, development of a "peace economy", in short focusing on the technology of war).

1) Just blaming the UN will not do, the churches must contribute to its 50th anniversary by helping to make it more effective. The UN is only as strong as its member states enable it to be. With around 55,000 personnel, the UN system has only about the same staffing level as health authorities in Wales - with rather more problems to confront. We must be careful with our accusations. UN specialists Sydney Bailey and Sam Daws stress:

"The United Nations should not be blamed for international crises, any more than we blame lifeboat crews for shipwrecks or fire-brigades for arson."[6]

2) We must debate the issue of "just intervention" and press governments to equip the United Nations with both the mandate and means (financial and personnel) necessary for effective peacekeeping, whether or not the ecumenical community can agree on the necessity of moving beyond traditional peacemaking to peace-enforcement by the international community.[7] The reputation of the UN is at stake over the effectiveness and consistency of its peacekeeping.

Criteria for intervention have been outlined with admirable clarity by the US Catholic Bishops. They stress that indifference to human suffering cannot be accepted; that sovereignty and non-interference are important, but not absolute, principles; that force must

be a last resort; that intervention may be necessary in extreme situations, but that it must be a contribution to strengthening rather than undermining the effect of international law.[8] The issue of how to address war crimes and major violations of human rights requires urgent attention.

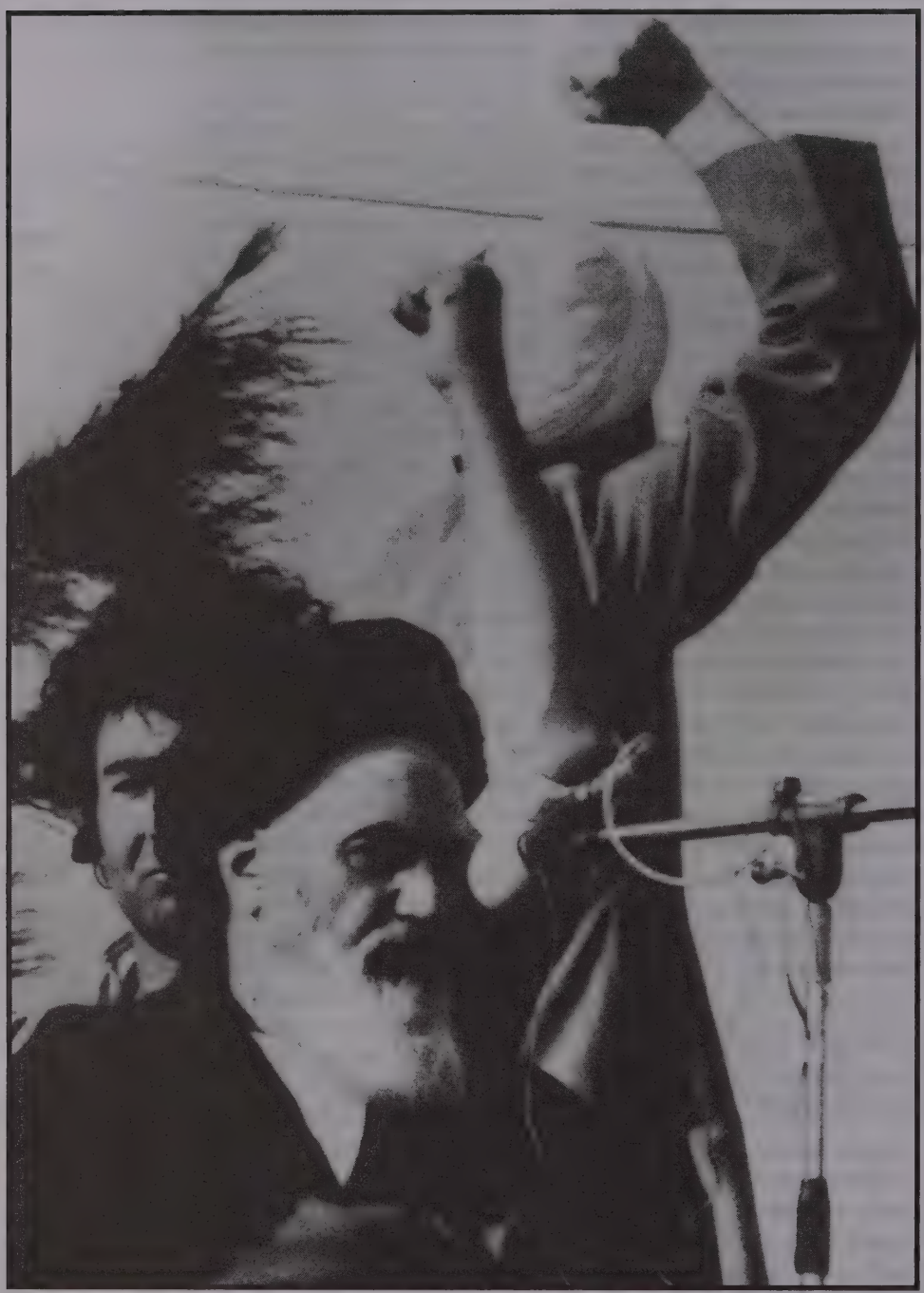
3) The churches should reinvigorate (as the WCC is currently making efforts to do) their commitment to work on behalf of refugees and displaced persons and engage in significant action against the root causes which have led to over 23 million people being made refugees worldwide and at least as many displaced within their home countries.

4) Given that almost all wars are now internal conflicts within states (about 30 major conflicts at an one time), effective response to in ternal wars should be a focus. Th issue is not new, but the ecumenic movement has been slow to ad dress it. The Biafra conflic Lebanon, Northern Ireland (or an of the many other cases) shoul have been warning enough. It now widely recognised that ethni and religious dimensions are ke elements as states break apart. Th World Council of Churches ha made a long-standing commitmen to challenging racism through th Programme to Combat Racism, bu the work on ethnic conflict is un derdeveloped.

If the WCC wishes to reserve th term racism primarily for whit racism and there are good analy ical arguments for doing so, the the issue of ethnicity must be ad dressed in other ways within th WCC's work. This work has begu e.g. through the Consultation o "Ethnicity and Nationalism" i Colombo in November 1994.[9] can hardly be said that what ha been done so far is an adequate re sponse to such an urgent and com plex issue. Developing work wit such organisations as the Worl Conference on Religion for Peac interreligious approaches to peace making must be pursued. The de fusing of tension between religion and particularly the response to re ligious fundamentalism remain ke areas.[10]

5) Following the lead of th WCC's regional series of meeting on the issue, the churches shoul make themselves effective in a cam paign against violence agains women covering issues such a campaigning against the use (an toleration) of rape as a weapon o war, right through to the male at titudes and social structures whic encourage or tolerate violenc against women.[11]

6) In academic and ecumenica circles there is a quasi-liturgica lip service to the concept of devel



unhcr/a. hollmann

The defusing of tension between religions and particularly the response to religious fundamentalism remain the key areas.

oping an "early warning system" for violent conflict. Just repeating the recommendation over a twenty year period is not the same as putting it into practice. Why are the churches so bad at responding before disaster? Of course humanitarian responses after disasters are essential, but even 10% of the resources devoted to disaster relief and humanitarian assistance would provide a very significant capacity for preemptive work to avoid disasters.

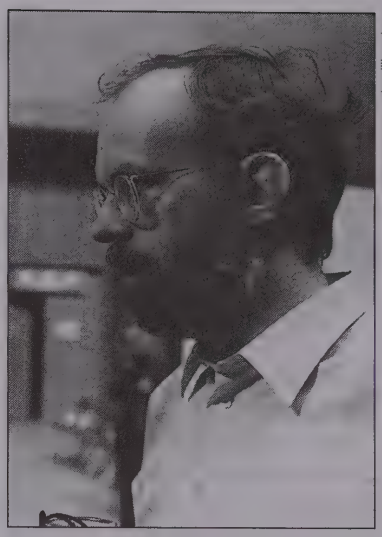
7) Developing the possibilities for, and training for, nonviolent volunteering (Global Peace Service). This must be done to the highest standards, in most situations properly equipped and trained UN peacekeepers are much more use than idealistic volunteers. But, for example, election monitoring by properly trained volunteers (cf. the recent South African experience of the EMPSA campaign) can be important. Human rights monitoring is a key area.

Volunteers must, however, be ready to die for peace I mean that in all seriousness, since preparation for extreme situations is at least as important for non-violent volunteers as for soldiers who have a weapon to defend themselves. They must also be prepared for long spells when nothing happens. The absence of incidents can be evidence for effective presence (or alternatively for a false assessment of the need!).

8) Studying the effectiveness of alternatives to war particularly mass nonviolent action[12] and sanctions[13]. This will require a greater clarity within the Ecumenical Movement that violence and nonviolence is one dimension of the discussion, and coercive and non-coercive measures represent another axis of policy choice. It is, for example, quite possible to use coercive non-violent measures by bringing pressure to achieve a result.

9) I would also propose an intensive dialogue with military personnel. I have been immensely impressed at the professionalism and commitment of the British officers with UN peacekeeping experience whom I have heard speaking. The churches should learn from them and also help to create a climate of opinion more determined to support UN Peacekeeping and to make it more effective.

10) The development and preservation of peaceful alternatives also seems to me to be essential. In this regard, it is vital that the new South Africa works and that the churches do all that they can to support it if necessary, through criticism of particular policies (as Archbishop Desmond Tutu has shown with his critique of the "gravy train" mentality of high salaries for the government and his opposition to arms sales playing an important role in the economy).



peter williams / wcc

Roger Williamson works for the Church of England on international affairs. He is a Unit III Commissioner. He recently co-edited (with Alan Race) a book entitled True to This Earth (OneWorld, Oxford, 1995) on the main threats to human survival. The views expressed here are his personal opinions.

[1]. Cf. W.A. Visser't Hooft, Memoirs, WCC, Geneva, 1987 (1st edn 1973), p. 72.

[2]. ibid. pp. 293-4.

[3]. Letter of the General Secretary, 21.4.1995.

[4]. See the work of Hizkias Assefa Mediation of Civil Wars on this subject, and also James Mabor Gatkuoth, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Sudan", in: Ecumenical Review Vol. 47 No. 2 April 1995, pp. 206-16.

[5]. L. Freedman, "Weak States and the West", in: L. Freedman (ed.), War, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1994 pp. 357-63. Quote from p. 363.

[6]. S.D. Bailey & S. Daws, The United Nations: A Concise Political Guide, 1995 (3rd edn.), p. 110.

[7]. "Just Intervention?" is a topic being covered by a CCADD study convened by Sir Hugh Beach and the author. On the UN, see: B. Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, UN, New York, 1992, & New Dimension of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era, UN, New York, 1993. See also: E. Childers with B. Urquhart, Renewing the United Nations System, (Development Dialogue 1994:1), Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden, 1994; G. Evans, Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, Australia, 1993.

[8]. U.S. Bishops, "The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace", in: Origins Vol. 23 No. 26, December 9 1993, pp. 449-64. Cf. p. 461.

[9]. Cf. the papers in: Ecumenical Review Vol. 47 No. 2, April 1995, pp. 189-231.

[10]. The massive Fundamentalism Project coordinated by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby at the University of Chicago should be mentioned here.

[11]. Cf. A. Gnanadason, No Longer a Secret: The Church and Violence against Women, WCC, Geneva, 1994; P. Granjon & P. Deloche, "Former Yugoslavia: Rape as a Weapon of War", in: Refugees, UNHCR, Geneva, August 1993, pp. 42-4; E. Ferris, Women War & Peace, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 1993; E. Stanko, Everyday Violence: How Women and Men Experience Sexual and Physical Danger, Pandora, London, Sydney & Wellington, 1990.

[12]. Cf. the work of Gene Sharp and others - including study of the "classics" of nonviolence, especially Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The more recent experiences of Latin America, the Philippines and Eastern Europe, as well as the "mix" of violent and nonviolent struggle in such places as South Africa are vital. Similarly, the crushing of the democracy movement in China (Tiananmen Square) is also instructive.

[13]. It is encouraging that the September 1995 Central Committee has a well-prepared paper on this issue before it.

After the war?

I would like to work in a sweet factory.

by Josué Anselmo

After their victory over the pro-Soviet regime of Mohamed Njibullah in April 1992, the Afghani Mujaeddin failed to form a stable government in Kabul. Since then, the country is ravaged by a merciless civil war, and the capital is divided into sections where rival factions fight for control. The United Nations evacuated the city in 1992. During February 1995, a United Nations' mission did not succeed in reinstalling peace in the country.

Protected behind the sandbags surrounding his sentry, Abdoul Raouf dismounts and reassembles his hundred-shot Kalachnikov sot taka (a "100 noise"), checks its parts and makes sure that everything is good. By his side, a cup of smoked tea exhales a fruity perfumed smell on the metal of the weapons and on the dust of the ground. And Abdoul tells his story. How at the age of four, he saw his father leave the house at dusk for a mission against the occupying Soviets never to come back again. How he collected bits of shrapnel, when he was young, to make up shaky trucks. How his mother screamed whenever he went away from the house, thinking that he might be run over by a tank patrolling the capital, or hit by a stray bullet or just simply disappear.

Today, his mother does not shout after him anymore. He is a man: he is twelve years old. "I see her once a week, for two hours", he says, with a twinge of sadness detected behind a faint voice like that of a little girl. A babyish face with a much too large green turban covering his head, Abdoul expresses his desire to see more of his mother. However, every time he leaves to join her at the other end of the city, he jeopardizes his sentry and the lives of his comrades.

Seated on wooden benches in a circle around him, fifteen adults acquiesce in silence; they are shabbily-dressed soldiers loaded with Russian arms. When we ask Abdoul if he has friends, he is astonished. With a glance at the lined-up soldiers, he affirms they are all his friends. Abdoul has "many friends", but not a single playmate. War is a serious affair, and Abdoul is a soldier.

Abdoul is paid 15,000 Afghanis (US$8) monthly by the Hazara factional army, which controls Western Kabul, to make war. And he has already killed three men. This was seven months ago during an artillery fire exchange with a government battalion. Night fell on the "hill of antennas", one of the summits surrounding the Afghani capital. With the other six soldiers of this clan, he was ready to defend his sentry against the government forces. It was at this moment when they arrived. "They were about fifteen who tried to approach our bunker. We, we were only seven, but well-armed: rocket-launcher PJ7, Kalachnikov and our PK, capable of firing 250 bullets per minute with a 1500 meter range. The, we fired. It was them or us. I released a burst of gunfire and three men fell. When we came out early the following day, they were dead."

A babyish face with a much too large green turban covering his head, Abdoul expresses his desire to see more of his mother.

No special pride in his voice, but an extraordinary indifference. When asked about his feelings for killing three men, Abdoul replied with the same confidence: "They were enemies, not civilians. Why were they armed?"

Behind the sandbags lies a deserted road which disappears in the Afghani capital which is 70% destroyed. There, a million inhabitants struggle against hunger, thirst and epidemics which gradually threaten the city. A desperate million people are shaken by a permanent anxiety of the bomb that will tear their bodies and destroy their houses. About thirty shells daily hit the populated areas of the Afghani capital. In the month of September 1994 alone, there were a thousand dead or injured in one week in Kabul. And the fighting goes on amidst the thunder of the shells and the silence of the international community.

Universe of pain

It is in this universe of pain that Abdoul is growing up. And he is

conscious of the fact that he is privileged. Unlike children of his age, Abdoul does not have to walk the whole day lugging a heavy pail of water in each hand to sell the previous beverage at 10 Afghanis for five sips. Neither is he forced by destitute parents to go looking for bits of scrap-iron in ruined houses riddled with mines and unexploded shells, to resell them later to a wholesaler. A very precarious situation, indeed.

No, Abdoul is a soldier.

The army pays him and supplies ammunition and foodstuffs every fortnight: rice, beans and some meat. It provides shelter to his group: a half-destroyed brick-lime shanty cottage where the entry is used as a waiting-room. The first floor has a primitive kitchen. The ground-floor, less exposed, is a dormitory: two rows of beds without blankets are placed on the dust in a semi-dark hall. The armoury is on the side, in what used to be a basement.

Today, his mother does not shout after him anymore. He is a man: he is twelve years old.

Responding to artillery

Abdoul's days start at seven by checking the weapons and ammunition; he consecrates the rest of the time to guarding the district control sentry, but not always very vigilantly. He inspects the cars which cross his checkpoint and confiscates whatever he finds of arms, money, food or cocaine. Posted behind the terrace on the first floor, Abdoul responds to government artillery fire and automatic weapons, only a 100 metres away in the area of no man's land which separates the two factions.

These two factions have recently signed a truce after the merciless struggle which left the Western district in shambles.

Nonetheless, they still exchange shelling intermittently, for unknown reasons. Love is blind and so is war.

What a beautiful night!

For Abdoul, the night is the most terrible moment. In the darkness, he alone must oversee the movements of the numerous government forces expected to attack the Hazara faction at any time. Rockets of Stalin are launched. What a beautiful night! One would imagine red and yellow shooting stars. A frightening show nevertheless for a twelve-year-old solder or civilian, when we know that each comet, once exploded, might kill twenty people.

Abdoul remains a child. War leaned over his cradle at birth and never left.

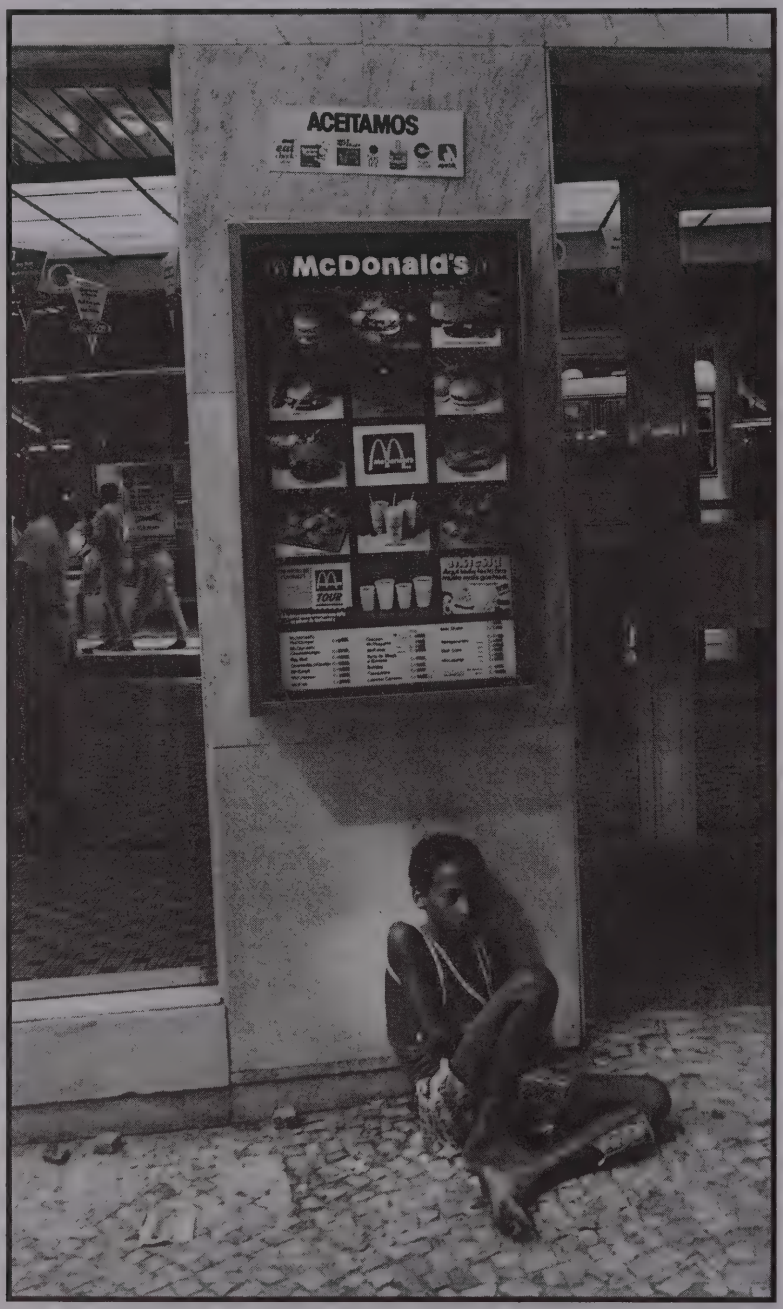
When we ask Abdoul what peace means to him, the child's face darkens and after a long moment of silence, he murmurs: "It is security, it is when there are no more weapons". Abdoul can handle his machine-gun very dexterously, but his Kalachnikov is so heavy that he can carry it only for three minutes. When asked how he conceives his future, once the war is over, he gives this extraordinary answer from the other end of his gun: "I would like to work in a sweet factory".

Josué Anselmo is a French journalist who has recently visited Afghanistan. This article was first published in International Children's Rights Monitor, vol. 11, no. 4, 1994 and vol. 12, no. 1, 1995 (double issue) which is the quarterly publication of the organisation Defence for Children International, Geneva.

Complexity beyond the just war theory

a holistic view of violence

by Thoko and Malusi Mpulwana



nando neves-it / wcc

The structural violence of abject poverty into which many children are born is as violent as the state of war into which some children are born.

In the early church, the ethical challenge of violence was resolved in categorical terms a Christian is not to participate in acts of war for war is an institution of violence and the killing of persons. After the Christian Church had come into alliance with the political establishment the debate tilted in favour of an acceptance of the necessity of war through the just war theory.

The three basic tenets of the just war theory were: that the cause be a just one; that a legitimate authority declares the war; and that war be an act of last resort. These gave clear parameters by which churches were able to bless wars, and lend moral and spiritual support to armies and their violent trade.

It was to the same just war principles that the defenders of liberatory movements were to appeal, in the nationalistic campaigns against colonial powers over the last 30 years. As a result, the application of the just war criteria became highly relative to who benefits from the violence to be justified.

The old just war theory cracked further in the face of the large scale ethnic conflicts that swept across the globe in the late 80s and early 90s: in the former Soviet republics; the Balkans, especially former Yugoslavia; in Asia; central Africa, especially in Rwanda and Burundi; and to some extent in southern Africa, especially in the Johannesburg labour hostels of South Africa. What, in the context of ethnic violence, was the extent of a just cause? What could be meant by a legitimate authority between feuding ethnic groups? Legitimate to whom? What could be the meaning of last resort in this context?

If anything the political expression of ethnic violence shows that politics can be an avenue for the channelling of long standing tra-

ditional prejudices against people considered different by race, gender, language or custom. Where institutionalised traditions and customs fail to sustain prejudice, politics come in to legitimate and create boundaries of plausibility around a basically prejudicial position. Politics provide the basis for enforcement. Such enforcement breaks into violent conflict at the point where politics collapse altogether.

As we see it, there seems to be a universal cycle of subjugation, where initial violence or threat thereof, intimidates a weaker party such as a woman in a domestic situation, or dominated racial/ethnic groups. As the weak resign themselves into an accommodation with this less than ideal situation, out of fear of "rocking the boat", tradition is set, and customs develop with a social ideology that cements the practice. Where such tradition is challenged, politics are used to protect tradition, sometimes in the name of democracy. As politics are strained to their limit, open violence such as in police brutality, war, ethnic cleansing, rape, wife battering and female infanticide, takes over. Where this open violence leads to submission, the old status quo is maintained, and the cycle begins again. In some cases the tables may be turned, but the pattern remains the same even if the players change roles.

We assert that the ethnic conflicts of the 80s and 90s have had two significant effects on the violence debate:

- They rocked the foundations of the just war theory and demonstrated the narrowness of the violence debate in Christian ethics.
- They have opened the way for a more comprehensive treatment of the problem of violence, such that we can look at it holistically.

It is on these points that we focus our attention.

Just War Tradition and Prejudicial Violence

If you asked a parish pastor what the church's ethical teaching was on violence, the likelihood is that the pastor would tell you about the church's position on armed violence or violence related to physical conflict. This is because ordinarily we do not extend our ethical discussion of violence to, say, the daily problems of domestic and psychological violence. In line with this practice, the church tends to limit its standard teaching to the principles of the just war or just revolution theory. This theory presupposes violence in the context of states rather than violence related to individual personal emotions or ideologies.

Violence manifests itself in multiple forms that often have similarities of impact.

Ethnic/racial violence, sexual violence, or ideological violence can be said to emanate from within an individual. This prejudicial violence may then be aggregated into group action. We say it is prejudicial because one of the key factors that is central to such violence is prejudice that devalues the other person who is considered insignificant. Prejudicial violence stems from a false sense of self or group which goes against the Christian teaching of human relationality, after the image of God.

As prejudice devalues the target or victim of violence, nothing is excluded in the conduct of prejudicial violence victims are tortured, maimed, dismembered, torched, raped, and psychologically molested as a deliberate act of expressing disdain or superiority. Such violence blurs all notions of justness of a cause; legitimacy of authority; nor can prejudice make room for the principle of last resort. This is why we say prejudicial violence rocks the foundations of the just war theory. Arising further out of these observations, the undiscriminating nature of prejudicial violence leads us to find connecting threads between a whole variety of manifestations of violence. Hence we explore the holistic idea of violence.

Holistic Violence

As in the model of the violence cycle that we have described, we see a close relationship between traditions that undermine human dignity and human relationality; social customs; economics and politics; the threat of physical force and its actual application in various forms, rape, child abuse, infanticide, wife battering, maltreatment and undervaluing of dominated racial/ethnic or religious groups, women, as well as other social groups like the youth, the physically handicapped and the elderly.

As we approach the end of the second millennium of the Christian era, we are challenged to move away from the limited view of violence in organised militaristic terms. The pressing challenge of Christian ethics today is a comprehensive approach to the problem of social violence. We need to take seriously the growing number of individuals, churches and movements, who are calling for a comprehensive view of violence as it affects person to person relationships, groups relations, demographics, the environment, the viability of future generations and human relationships with the creator God.

Violence manifests itself in multiple forms that often have similarities of impact. For example, the structural violence of abject poverty into which many children are born is as violent as the state of war into which some children are born. The relationship between the violence-prone tendency of youths from poverty stricken communities is similar, and is as much an expression of trauma as can be expected from children who grow up in a war zone.

Thus we believe that the church's concern for hunger and poverty should conceptually be related to concern for civilian relief in war. Our concern for disarmament should conceptually be related to our concern for the sources of the culture of violence. Our concern for the indiscriminate targets of land mines should be related to our concern for rural development, ecological and human survival. This should influence the way in which nations and the world church respond to violence in different countries, societies and communities.

For example, churches and the international community tend to be reluctant to take explicit positions on the violent abuse of human rights. This might be because violence that does not involve international aggression tends to be viewed as a domestic matter, requiring little or no outside intervention; such as the attitude to the conflict in Bosnia Herzegovina, the Sudan and Rwanda and held for a long time over South Africa and violent apartheid, and might well have prevailed in regard to the evil practices of Nazi Germany. Another dimension of this is the tradition of not speaking out against violence committed by those considered to be allies. Thus the alliance between the South African apartheid regime and some Western countries made for a very tardy response to apartheid violence.

One may ask what this tendency of nations to "turn a blind eye", until too late, has to do with domestic violence. The link is that the attitude of the world to violence within nations is consistent with the attitude of neighbourhoods and local parish churches to violence in the homes. Domestic violence often gets overlooked in the name of culture, or non-interference, in affairs of other households. Men, even those who are pastors, tend to be slow in thought and action when confronted with the problem of domestic violence perpetrated by another man. It is like one is saying: "Well, I should be careful how I get into this matter, it might be me tomorrow!" We could call this the solidarity of silence where like people are reluctant to embarrass their kindred.

This solidarity can also blunt the prophetic ministry of the church. As late as 1985, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa could not pass a Synod Resolution, declaring that South Africa was in illegal occupation of Namibia. This, even though the Diocese of Namibia a constituent part of the Southern African Anglican Churches, was strenuously opposed to the occupation and the presence of Anglican military chaplains alongside the occupation forces.

Churches have a great difficulty to find a common language to pronounce on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In like manner, churches in Africa are likely to be more ambivalent in their stand against oppression and violence perpetrated by Africans, either as governments, party leaders, ethnic groups or spouses and parents. Violence has exposed that our generation of Christians exhibits less frequently, the legendary spirit of martyrdom, of those who have gone before us.

In the years leading to, and immediately following, Nelson Mandela's release from prison, the critical eyes of the world church and the community of nations were focused on the violence in South Africa. Most notably, the church in South Africa itself, became very vigilant against apartheid violence. However, since the 1994 democratic elections which brought a legitimate government of national unity, the church nationally has paid no systematic attention to the many forms of violence that are rampant in the country.

We wonder how, for example, the church helps the pastor to deal with a puffy-eyed woman who comes crying to the office, baby on back and toddler in tow, complaining of humiliating violence perpetrated by her husband. Do they just calm her down, pronounce a soothing prayer, invoking the comfort of the grace of God. Do they also denounce the evil act of the husband and seek his repentance and reparation, or do they shy away from intervention except for providing shelter and food? In the case of intervention, what if the husband claims cultural privilege to discipline his wife as a stamp of authority?

This leads to an even more fundamental question which precedes the point at which violence reaches breaking point. Rarely do we, as church, teach growing children specifically on gender relations. And yet in countries like South Africa, domestic violence and rape happen at the frequency of seconds.

Similar questions could be asked of the church's treatment of the ongoing prejudicial violence in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Up to now, church leaders have been a vital link, breathing a measure of "peace sense" into a situation of senseless violence that divides communities and families. In the main, the church has functioned through the method of maintaining strict neutrality, where no part of the church's presence has dared to pronounce on who is wrong in any instance in the conflicts, except to seek a cessation of hostilities. We are wondering if there would have been no positive dividend if, along-

side the peace-making efforts, churches had created a mechanism to analyze individual instances of violence and publicly expose the culprits, thus taking an active and unambiguous moral stand on violent conduct from whatever quarter.

We believe that naming the evil would help guide those Christians, especially parish clergy, who are caught in the dilemma of ministering to such conflict-riddled situations. Instead of crying "peace, peace" where there is no peace, Christian ministers on the ground would take cue from church pronouncements based on credible research, and analysis of who is at fault in a particular incident of killings. Then they could work towards a change of heart on the part of the guilty, and a healing of the aggrieved, in order to achieve comprehensive peace.

The question could be asked, what was the position of the church in Rwanda before the initial massacres became a global issue? Were the simmering hostilities that burst into ethnic violence not evident beforehand? Was there no point in time when the church could have recognised the growing evil of politicised ethnic hostility? Was there any way at all, in which the church could pronounce on, and act upon, the evil of ethnic violence without being misunderstood in the context of that ethnic "mêlée"? We may never know. But it could be a case of the solidarity of silence; a failure to recognise the moment of truth until it had passed, or the type of incapacity people normally call "the human factor", whatever that means!

In South Africa we recognise with admiration the role played by people who, specifically in the name of the gospel, witnessed against apartheid. Among them we may cite with respect, people like Beyers Naude, Ben Ngidi, Desmond Tutu, Sister Bernard Ncube, Frank Chikane, Michael Lapsley, Stanley Mogoba, Smangaliso Mkhatshwa, Allan Boesak, David Russell, Tshenuani Farisane, and others too many to name.

In their actions they took their lives into their own hands. Not withstanding the risks that such people took in "standing for the truth", it seems to us, that it was much easier to name the evil state violence of apartheid, and rally people against it, than it might be to mobilise against the evil of ethnic and socially diffuse evil of domestic violence. We wonder if this is not because of a lack of a comprehensive view of violence, which would help us make ready connections in recognising and confronting the evil as it comes in any form.

In sum, we believe that consistency of moral analysis, teaching and pronouncement on violence in all its manifestations, would give greater credibility to church witness even in more complicated historical moments. The preventive role of the church, through consistent teaching and a "signs of the times" vigilance, ahead of violent experiences, is one way in which Christians could be the "salt" in relation to violence.

The beginning of the Christian era heralded the restoration of the dignity of the human person, cre-

ated in the image of God for an eternally recreating relationship of self-giving between the relational Trinity and the socially conditioned humanity. Such a recreating relationship was based on a covenant that assumes a responsible human stewardship for the rest of creation. It is to this kind of relationship that Jesus of Nazareth became a witness, and for which his death and resurrection became a guarantee. The acceptance of violent suffering was his statement against violence, such that the early Christians were to maintain a tradition of absorbing violence rather than meting it out. Story after story of Christian martyrdom, is a repetition of the same tale of people whose obedience was a meeting point between their faith conviction and their moral conviction.

This is the ideal they have left us to hold up. Yet we know that it is an ideal that is hard to live up to, given the tough realities in the experiences of the world over the centuries.

Thus the violence debate remains with us, haunting us with the example of Christ and the tradition of the early church, and confronting us with the ugliness of violence in every sphere of our lives. But then, as long as the violence debate revolves only around the just war criteria of acceptability, we are bound to come down on opposite sides of the issue. Such was the debate over the acceptability or otherwise of the South African armed conflict. The solidarity of silence is very strong when it comes to friend and kin, whether such kin is in respect of blood relation, ethnic identity, nationality, political ideology, or governmental or geographic alliances.

The complexity of ethnic wars have exposed the inadequacy of our ethical tools. That in itself has helped us realise how many other forms of violence we are not addressing systematically. This is the inevitable weakness of the just war approach. As we appreciate that it is less than satisfactory, we should expand our attention to include in our radius, other facets of violence.

To this end, we suggest a few things that could be part of our attempt to meet our obligation for a holistic approach to the problem of violence.

- Families and congregations, denominationally and ecumenically, should openly discuss violence as they experience it, and let it be an ongoing preventative and awareness-raising programme. Above all, these discussions should be a regular resource for the development of the church's composite ethical teaching on violence. This should be pursued at synodal and ecumenical convention level.
- Teachings and action programmes that are appropriate for the different levels of church schools, from pre-schoolers to adult Christians, should be developed, as well as texts and teaching tools that can be used in the training of church ministers, lay and ordained. A lesson could be taken from the example of the Brazil Catholic Church's Campagna da Fraternidade. In this Lenten campaign, parishes and church formations across the country identify a critical issue on which society should repent and make amends. In 1987, when we both visited to study the church's work there, the campaign was on the problem of abandoned children. Using the see, judge, act model, research was done on the subject, which commanded a unified analytical focus on one issue by everyone. Statistics and life stories of causes and effects were produced and shared. The scriptures and Christian tradition were applied, to pronounce on the reality that had been described. Consequent to this, the remedial activities were planned and undertaken in various cities and localities.

  We suggest that the Brazilian approach to the meaning of Lent could be adopted and adapted to different parts of the world, and applied to the problem of violence. It could be combined with the efforts of the World Council of Churches' programme Theology of Life, for we believe that the problem of violence belongs in the theological discussion of human life.
- Conscious that the Christian Church no longer has as much moral authority as it used to have at some time in the past, we recommend that collaboration with other faiths and other agents of social mores be cultivated and promoted.

Finally, it is our belief that, with the global shrinking of natural resources, the world can expect a rising graph of violence, both social and militaristic. As violence invariably stalks human life like a shadow, part of the solution is in learning to analyze our own conduct and behaviour. The urgency will increase to equip ourselves as Christians, and be consistently proactive in our localities and different regions of the world. It is imperative that we have theologically sound and practical ways of dealing with violence such as in family feuds; sibling rivalries; parent-child and spousal conflicts; sexual violence; political violence; ethnic/racial violence; structural violence as experienced in poverty, environmental, institutional, cultural, gender and religious violence.

Ms Thoko Mpulwana is a member of the Unit III Commission and Moderator of the Working Group on Women.

The process for peace and democracy in Guatemala

A Protestant contribution

Since the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala (CIEDEG) came into being its basic purpose has been to channel and coordinate the efforts of all the different Protestant churches in the country, with a view to expressing our position publicly and openly.

We describe ourselves as a Protestant "option for the poor" and those who are economically, politically, socially and culturally marginalized.

We were set up as a body representing a religious evangelical and Protestant movement which channels, coordinates and supports efforts to put the kingdom of God into practice in a way that relates to the experience and everyday reality of Guatemala.

We have joined forces to build a new and more fraternal Guatemala based on justice, solidarity and community. It is our belief that to achieve this goal it is essential to strengthen civil society.

I. Our biblical-theological basis

Our starting point and frame of reference is the Bible. We stress that peace and democracy are the fruit of justice, respect for the rights of the poor and solidarity among the whole people. They are the fruit of a healthy relationship between God and human beings and among human beings themselves. Amongst other passages in the Old Testament we have based ourselves on the following:

continue overleaf

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

My people will live in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

...no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat... They shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord – and their descendants as well.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox (Isa. 32:16-18; 65:19-25).

In the light of this, and other biblical passages, we believe that peace cannot be achieved simply by signing a paper, but will be the outcome of a whole process leading step by step to the elimination of the causes which triggered the continuing armed conflict and crisis endured by Guatemala for the past thirty years. For how can there be peace while there are so many peasants without land and so many of Guatemala's citizens without work? How can there be peace while infant mortality is at such a level, while our country has the second highest rate of illiteracy in Latin America and the majority of the population does not have decent housing? How can there be peace when there is no respect for the right to life, when murders, abductions and extrajudicial killings continue to be perpetrated with total impunity?

Peace and democracy require the establishment of a constitutional state in which civilian rule takes precedence over military rule, and the military are subject to democratic institutions. A state which has:

- genuine independence of state powers;
- total observance of the full range of human rights;
- social justice and fairness in the whole production process;
- guarantees of a political democracy with ideological pluralism;
- clean-up and transparency of the electoral system;
- rule of law in the administration;
- democratization of the ownership and use of land;
- full respect for the identity of the Mayan people and their rights, including the right to self-determination;
- development of different forms of communal, social and individual ownership;
- free enterprise, with equal rights and opportunities for all forms of organization of ownership;
- conservation of the environment, based on respect for and renewal of nature in all its forms.

In short, economic, social and political conditions which allow the people at large to enjoy the country's natural wealth and resources and social output - not just as tributories of a law elaborated and exercised by a minority, but as co-authors fully exercising their rights on a footing of equality, with due regard for their particular identity and plurality.

II. Our participation in the process

In the national context, the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala (CIEDEG) has affirmed its Christian, evangelical character and has demonstrated its pastoral commitment to the process for peace and life in Guatemala. As the church we have confirmed our commitment to Guatemalan society and taken practical steps to support the peace process and democratization. As the church committed to the Kingdom of God and its justice, we consider that it is part of our Christian witness to support every hope and initiative for peace.

In the name of God's kingdom and God's purpose of peace we have offered ourselves to the parties in the conflict as a Christian agency or platform to help them move forward together along the path of peace. In all humility we have placed our resources at the disposal of all who are committed to the hope of peace. We have done so from a position of political independence, with the backing of the churches belonging to CIEDEG and with the intention of encouraging, supporting and participating in any dialogue for reconciliation, whether national or international, whatever the time and place.

We have demanded discussion of the economic problems, and essentially Guatelamalan agriculture, calling for the demilitarization of the country and the transformation of "swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:3). In the latter connection we have been seriously concerned about forced recruitment to military service and have supported conscientious objection.

In the framework of the Esquipulas II agreements, the Commission for National Reconciliation in 1988 called for the organization of a National Dialogue. This was the first time in the history of Guatemala that the different sectors of society, including the churches, have had the opportunity to express their opin-

ion, discuss and together seek solutions to the country's problems. It was not the first time that Christians had spoken out for peace and offered their services as mediators.

CIEDEG, the Roman Catholic Church, the Conference of Religious Orders in Guatemala (CONFREGUA), the Episcopal Church, the Permanent Assembly of Christian Groups (APGC) and the Jewish Community have all been actively involved in the National Dialogue and in the various committees associated with it, and have shown that Christians can and should be part of the dialogue process.

With the beginning of the National Dialogue and the setting up of the Commission for National Reconciliation, CIEDEG has taken part in commission meetings and also made a number of presentations from the biblical and Protestant point of view.

After various attempts at dialogue between the government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG), a meeting in Oslo, Norway was held. This led to a breakthrough and the start of a wider and more inclusive process involving important sectors of the country's social, economic and political life.

In view of this opening, the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala decided to support this process of dialogue for peace and contribute to it from the Protestant viewpoint. It did so in a number of different ways, such as attending the preparatory meetings convened by the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR), and taking part in the coordinating meetings for this among the different religious communities in the country. These meetings were held to prepare the input of the religious community before the conversations held in Quito, Ecuador and also helped to build unity.

The National Dialogue was confronted with difficulties and limitations, in that basic actors in the national problems were absent, having either been excluded or having excluded themselves, as in the case of the army, CACIF and the URNG.

Nonetheless, the seed had been planted and a precedent had been set for Christian involvement. Later, the new awareness created by participation in the National Dialogue prompted us to launch the Days for Life and Peace as a way of bringing the values of the gospel into the process and trying to "be instruments of reconciliation and dialogue, and to channel concerns and intitiatives for life and peace coming from the different sectors of society".

What participation meant for us

This dialogue is not the "end in itself" for the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala, but part of a whole process aimed at finding a solution to the problems which have given rise to so much inequality, injustice and an internal armed conflict in Guatemala.

In this context our participation in Quito meant:

- reaffirming our determination and our faith that the solution to the country's problems may be found peacefully, through political channels and dialogue;
- undertaking to educate the members of all our local churches, project beneficiaries, participants in courses, workshops, seminars and all educational activities to participate actively, responsibly and directly in the quest for "a national consensus" for a democracy in which all sectors of society, and especially the Indigenous communities, can participate.
- Working for an integral understanding of peace, based on respect for human rights and the biblical Shalom; fostering awareness of the need for peace and national reconciliation.
- Working continuously to make people understand that this crisis, and the armed conflict, have a root cause and not until that cause is eliminated will there be peace and genuine reconciliation among ourselves and with our God.

III. Our role pending the signing of a firm and lasting peace

It is important for CIEDEG to give thought to the time when a firm and lasting peace is signed, and to its future, but given our conception of peace we are interested in and concerned about the present the time that will elapse between today and whenever the peace is signed. It is our belief that peace is not "signed" but "built". That being so, we believe that today is the time to build peace, by working out agreements which do justice to the demands of the majorities and developing mechanisms to ensure compliance with such agreements.

Our role at this time is to be vigilant in order to avoid further polarization, prevent any interruption of the process and avoid a repressive solution which is being encouraged at present.

The signing of peace will not in itself solve the enormous economic, social and political polarization, nor the ethnic-cultural disparities; neither will it of itself bring about respect for Human Rights or substantially reform the administration of justice so that impunity will become yet more entrenched. It will not establish the economic means for a better distribution of wealth and income and it will still allow the present neoliberal policies to be applied even though these are simply fuelling future, possibly uncontrollable social explo-

sions. It will likewise do nothing towards realizing the inalienable aspirations to equality and full participation of the Mayan people who cling to the hope that in the present process of dialogue and negotiation a basic framework will be agreed for the full exercise of their specific rights and identity.

The building of peace thus involves designing and implementing the institutional and constitutional changes Guatemala needs if it is to be a country of justice, democracy, development and equality.

IV. Conclusions

1. We have been heirs and partakers of the spirit of struggle of the Christians of this country who for so many years have walked with the people, even when the shadow of violence has been upon us.

2. The participation of Protestants in the National Dialogue is an unprecedented event, since this is the first time that we evangelical Christians have taken part in discussions of the national situation and presented before a national political forum the central issues we consider to be at the core of the country's problems.
   It was a suitable place in which to express the social aspirations which we uphold as Christians and, while they are based on our particular beliefs, they coincide with the aspirations of many other people in the different sectors of national life. This is the sign of a new dynamic of witness, faith and outreach among evangelicals in relation to national problems.

3. As CIEDEG we have been directly involved in a qualitative leap in the Christian field. This has confronted us with new tasks and struggles requiring to be oriented and channeled in the framework of national needs set today by the whole process of reclaiming our country for ourselves.

4. We have participated in the process which is laying the basis for political solutions to the overall problems of the country, which can be seen in their most acute form in the internal armed conflict.

5. Given the need for a broad and representative National Dialogue in order to seek a national consensus with a view to shaping the national, constitutional and institutional changes which this country needs, we Christians can be an acceptable channel for promoting communication and cultivating convergences and alliances among the different sectors.

6. Affirming our identity as Protestants, we have participated directly in stimulating, coordinating and accompanying the whole peace process and encouraging the involvement of the civil society through the Coordinating Committee of Civil Sectors, leading to this Assembly of the Civil Society involving ten social sectors of the Guatemalan people.

7. We are preparing to support and press for a National Agency to regulate the whole peace process, in which all sections of the Guatemalan people will participate and be represented, especially the marginalized majorities, supporting local initiatives leading to national involvement, seeking to be the architects of a new Guatemala.

Guatemala, July 1995

Translated from the Spanish Language Service, WCC

PRAYER FOR THE LIBERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

PRAYER FOR THE LIBERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
PRAYER FOR THE LIBERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
PRAYER FOR THE LIBERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
PRAYER FOR THE LIBERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Stop pruning my leaves and taking away my hoe.
Enough of drowning my beliefs and chopping up my roots.
Have done with pulling my lungs out and suffocating my mind.
No more of killing my chants and silencing my voice.
The roots do not dry of those whose seeds
are scattered on the ground to sprout.
Grandparents gifts are not dimmed rich memory,
ancestral blood: rituals of remembrance.
Broad wings are not clipped
because the sky is freedom
and faith goes to meet it.
Pray for us, my father-shaman,
so that the evil spirit of the forest
may cause no weakness, poverty or death.
Pray for us, earth our mother,
so that this clothing
and these evil men
vanish at the sound of the maracás.
Take way from us the misfortune of liquor and strife.
Help us find unity among nations.
Light the way of men, women and children.
Do way with the envy and ingratitude of the powerful.
Give us light, faith and life in the sacred rites.
Lead us, oh Tupã from violence and killing.
In a sacred place by the stream
on the nights of the full moon, oh Marçal, call
the spirits of the rocks to dance the Toré.
In the festivals of manioc and shamans
bring us vital resistance
after we drink our chincha in faith.
Pray for us, bird of the heavens,
so that jaguars, wild pigs, tucans and capybaras
come and circle the Jurena, São Francisco and Panamá rivers
and even the Atlantic seas,
because we are pacific, in spite of everything.
Show us the way like a dolphin.
Light the star of our future.
Help us play the magic flutes
so we can sing you the offertory chant
and dance in the lamaká rite.
Pray for us, shaman-bird,
in the Northeast, in the South, every morning,
in the Amazon, in the arid lands and in the heart of a woman.
Pray for us, macaws, catfish and armadillos.
come out to meet us,
my God, Nhéndiru!
Make the children happy
who are reborn of Indian bellies.
Give us hope each day
because we only ask for land and peace
for our poor these rich children

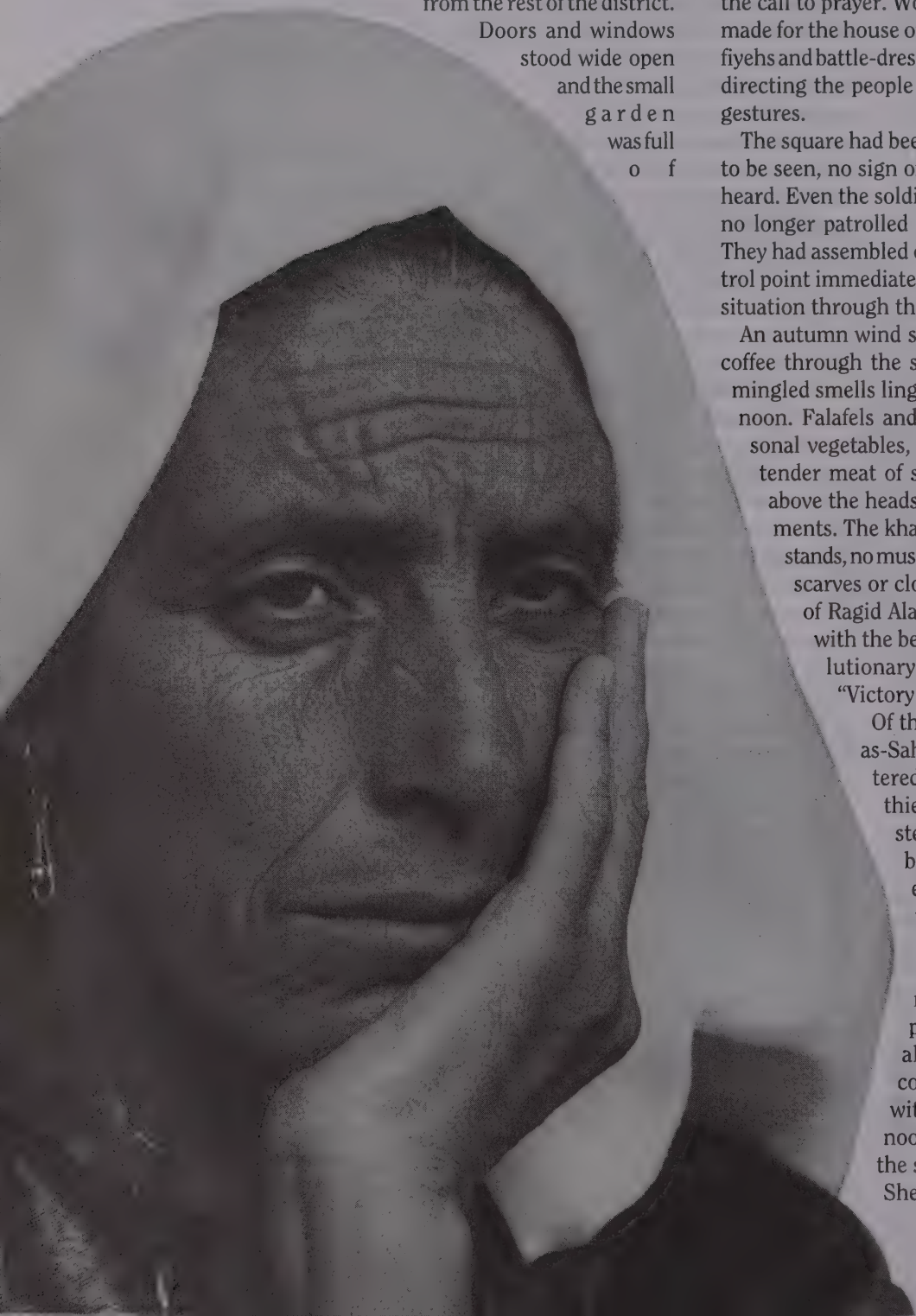
(Nhéndiru: God)

Eliane Potiguara

The barricade

by Sahar Kalifeh

The narrow street filled with mourners and demonstrators. Every inch of pavement seethed with the crowd of people streaming towards the house of mourning. The suspect house was no longer set apart from the rest of the district. Doors and windows stood wide open and the small garden was full of girls. Youths surrounded the building, standing on the edge of the walls. Flags fluttered. Palm branches, flowers, lilies, posies. On every wall, the martyr's photo.



Songs and hymns resounded, praising steadfast courage and the people of the land. Applause drowned the call to prayer. Worshippers left the mosque and made for the house of mourning. Young men in kaffiyehs and battle-dress lined the street in double rows, directing the people towards the house with silent gestures.

The square had been swept clear of life. Not a soul to be seen, no sign of movement, not a sound to be heard. Even the soldiers had suddenly vanished and no longer patrolled the streets stalking new prey. They had assembled on the terraced roof of the control point immediately above the flag, observing the situation through their field glasses.

An autumn wind sprang up, wafting the scent of coffee through the streets, filling the air with the mingled smells lingering since the shops closed at noon. Falafels and doughnuts, entrails and seasonal vegetables, spices, fennel, onions and the tender meat of slaughtered offerings dangling above the heads of the passers-by on the pavements. The khan too was empty of traders. No stands, no music cassettes, no brightly-coloured scarves or clothing, no street cries. No sign of Ragid Alama, the singer, with his "You, with the beauty-spot...", none of the revolutionary hymns "Fire mountain" and "Victory generation".

Of the old furniture laid out in Bab as-Saha there remained only a few tattered sofas that any self-respecting thief would have been ashamed to steal. Rubbish, cardboard boxes, bent wires, tapes, rotting vegetables were piled against the walls.

The Hajji walked, a little unsteadily, towards the house of mourning, dragging her bag and praying "In the name of God, the almighty, the merciful..." She could see the empty street filling with jinni. The clear call to afternoon prayer rang out, so loud that the souk vibrated from end to end. She looked up. There between sky-

lights and lamps hung a ballooning spider's web thick, ancient, almost primeval. Spiders the size of toads paraded slowly between the cracks in the roofs. Old Nablus, old, old as time and history itself. She shuddered, and slipped past, giving it a wide berth. As she climbed the steps to the square she caught sight of the ranks of men, the control point, the soldiers with their field-glasses. The long blue and white flag floated in the breeze. There was no-one in the square except herself. It was the same in the alleys and courtyards. At the entrance to the street were piled the tons of rock, blocking the way. She had to make a complicated detour to reach the house with the mourners.

A boy asked her, "Sitt Sakiya, did you see the army?"

She nodded. "I saw them, I saw them."

"With field-glasses?"

"Yes, with field-glasses"

"Were they armed?"

"The same as usual."

"Are there many of them?"

"Goodness knows how many. Maybe twenty, maybe fifty, a hundred even, I couldn't count them."

The boy turned and went back to his friends. She watched them as they climbed the wall.

She saw the young boys and girls, the bunches of flowers, the lilies and palm branches, with Ahmed's picture in the centre of each. She walked on through the little garden and the corridor, then up the stairs to the hall and the landing which were already overcrowded. She went into the sitting room. This time she did not hear the crystals on the ceiling at all. She went forward immediately to where the women were sitting with Nasha. Nasha was swathed in deep black and somehow appeared to be acting unnaturally, or so it seemed to the Hajji. She wasn't weeping, but she wasn't looking at the women and the other people either. Her eyes were fixed blankly on a spot high up on the wall.

The Hajji sat down. She nibbled a sugared almond as a blessing on the procession that would accompany the young bridegroom and listened to the songs of revolution and freedom. She remembered another funeral. The time when Husam had come and was angry with her. When she said she was anxious about him and he upbraided her, "Are you worried about appearances or about me?" On that day too she had remembered the old tales with the women and their water-pipes, her father's wife, by-gone times and her own childhood. Good heavens! even she, Sakiya, the former Hajji, the boys' mother had once been a child and had a past! Hadn't this thought occurred to her already, this morning during the birth when the baby's head appeared? The child had howled so loud that the whole room echoed with it. Hush, little one, may God protect you. Today I draw you from your mother's womb, tomorrow the womb of the earth will enfold you again. Be still, my son, don't cry so. Or yes, cry, cry, don't stop, for fear of what the future may hold for you. Can there be anything worse than that? She wiped her face with the edge of her robe and gazed absently into space. If the baby knew what awaited him, he would crawl back in again! If he knew, if he knew... Lucky he doesn't know!

Samar sat down beside the Hajji. "Where have you been, Hajji?" she whispered. "I've been waiting for you!"

The Hajji looked at Samar, great God, she would never have dreamt that something would come of these two and the girl stay here in the district. Husam would get her after all. The roots of the place held her fast, binding her to it. Once she had said to Samar, "If you married a man who was not being hunted, we would have lost you, and you would be lost. He would set you up at home and you would be content, like all women." Samar had smiled at her, with tears in her eyes. "And why not, Hajji? I'm only a woman after all and I dream of having my own home and a proper husband who comes home to me every evening." Then the tears had welled in her eyes too, but she hadn't smiled.

"He's still limping", Samar said. "He's walking on crutches, and the pain never lets up, it's merciless. He's still far away, he still only looks at the world from the distance. He's not able to come down a single step, as far as the edge of the town, down to us. If only I could give him a leg of mine, if only I could give him wings! If only I could get him a pass!"

The Hajji shook her head. "There, my child," she whispered, "it's his fate and that's all there is to it. Go now to Nasha, she's waiting for you."

She went over to Nasha, kissed her and pressed a note into her hand. Nasha unfolded it and read without blinking.

"What does he write to you?"

"Didn't you read it?"

"No, I haven't read it."

Nasha flushed crimson to the roots of her hair. "He says... he says...", she exploded, "our heart's blood for Palestine!"

Samar looked at her as though sensing a volcano about to erupt. "What news shall I give him, what shall I tell him from you this time?" she asked kindly.

Nasha turned and looked straight at her with her tear-swollen eyes. "Tell him, tell him ...this Palestine of yours is a Moloch, it gorges and gorges and but it is never satisfied."

Samar started back and could say nothing more.

Outside the noise increased, the revolutionary songs and the rhythmic clapping sounded louder. Suddenly an explosion rang out nearby, rattling the

crystals of the chandelier. The words grew louder, the crowd swayed. Faces at windows. Then a burst of gunfire and a shout "Another martyr!" The women jumped up. The Koran reader fell silent. The revolutionary hymns were forgotten. Here and there a snatch continued, the chorus became disjointed.

The Hajji ran out with her bag. She saw the wounded man on top of the barricade, lying on the rocks. She stopped. "How can I get up to him?" she asked. "It's too late, Hajji. He's given his life for you."

A masked man holding a Molotov cocktail shouted "Get some tools and pick-axes, we'll get this barrier down!" The black-smiths from the district, refuse workers and street-cleaners, young lads, some masked, others not everyone flocked round. Chaos and confusion. Shouted words. "Down with the barricade, down with the barricade, down, down, down." Then they really got going. Drills, saws, files, pick-axes.

"Come on, come on! Let's get it down." But the stone was hard, hard as the rock of God and the place was narrow and the pyramids close together. Smash it, where's the drill, bring the saw, smash it. Bloody rock! Damn and blast it! It's scandalous! A fucking trap, a fucking prison! A strike one day, and the next a funeral, and then another ten as curfew just for a bonus! Streets and crossroads sealed off, foreign flags fluttering under our noses. What kind of life is this! That damned control point is like a dagger at our throat. We're like sheep going to the slaughter. They struggle and toss their horns but then they fall over and bleed to death. Smash it, tear it down... Enough of being prisoners! Damn them all!

Nasha looked out of the window in surprise. What's all the noise about? In answer came the shouted slogans of the young men and girls, "Forward, with God, down with it, down with it!"

A grenade was fired. Gas, mourners and women screaming. And all the time the saws, buzz, buzz... never stopping. Come on, lads, forward with God! Bloody rocks! Smash them here! Another burst of gunfire. And again a boy tumbles from the wall. Shouts of fury, "Another martyr, another martyr. That makes three!"

"I'm going up there!" shreiked a masked youth. "Over the barricade and across the square. I'll burn that flag of their's." They hoisted him up with hands and shoulders. He held a Molotov cocktail in his hand. No sooner was he up than a marksman's bullet got him. Groaning he fell back on the rocks.

"Come on, next one!" yelled the commander. "We'll keep trying even if they get us all." They hoisted the third man up, then the fourth, the tenth, the twenty-fifth... The barricade had grown higher. A mass of rock and human flesh.

The women wrung their hands. Sitt Sakiya cried, "There's no power yet... But, my son, you don't have to get there today. Wait till tomorrow, wait till nighttime when they're asleep. Don't provoke them in broad daylight." Nobody listened to her. An intoxicating madness had taken hold of them. The flag had become their Mecca. There was no more stopping to think, no other way to go but forward! "Now or never. Do or die," shrieked a young girl, standing on the wall brandishing a large flag. "Don't stop to think about it! Go on, get them! Get that blue and white flag! Go on, lads!" She was seized by a fit of coughing.

Nasha asked, "What's all the noise about?"

"They're out to get the flag and the control point," Samar shouted, "don't you see?"

"Well, and so what! Why all the shouting? Does it have to be from here? Do you have to get yourselves slaughtered like sheep? Come with me, I'll show you how we'll get there."

She took the girl by the hand, nudged one, and then another and another. "Come on, follow me. I'll show you something. You want the control point? Come and see for yourselves. You want that flag? Come with me underground."

They went into the kitchen. Through the store room. Down the secret stair into the cellar. Then through the secret door onto the square. In minutes the women emerged from the under earth and came streaming into the open.

The girl with the flag went storming on towards the control point above them. The flag fluttered in her hand, she had matches and a Molotov cocktail with her. The Hajji shouted, "The woman's mad, is she tired of living? Get her down, bring her back!... Too late, she's dead!" The girl had fallen in front of the control point, right by the wall where the flag hung.

Nasha stood in the middle of the square watching the scene, her face impassive. Over there the soldiers in the control point, here the women in the square. The young men were still hacking doggedly away at the mass of rock. Pick axes, saws, drills. Perplexed she whispered: "Why all this turmoil? And all for nothing but a Moloch like this..."

Stumbling, she ran over to the girl. The women had surrounded her, the Hajji had opened her bag. The Molotov cocktail lay beside the wall, underneath the flag. Nasha took the bottle and opened it carefully, then poured the liquid over both the colours. She raised her hand, looking Samar in the face.

Samar whispered, "So you've done it at last, after all, Nasha?"

She nods, impassive, and hisses, "But not for this Moloch... or Ahmed."

And she struck the match.

Vocabulary

Fire Mountain: Name given to the area round Nablus which was a centre of the Palestinian uprising from 1936 to 1939.

Hajji: Honorary title and form of address for a person who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

jinn, jinni: spirits of smokeless flame appearing to human beings in various forms and able to intervene in human lives; they play an important part in folk beliefs and folktales.

Sahar Kalifeh is a Muslim writer and poet.

Translated from the German translation of the original Arabic - Language Service, WCC

wcc photo

The presence of the WCC at the fourth UN World Conference on Women and the NGO forum 1995

Billed as the last chance in the 20th century to advance the cause of women's rights on a global level, and building on previous UN conferences in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985), the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing (4-15 September 1995) was intended to translate UN rhetoric into real changes in the way women live.

Under the banner of Equality, Development and Peace, its Platform for Action, a document now refined and ratified by the Conference, spells out a wide range of objectives relating to women in the economic, political and social spheres that, together, prescribe an end to discrimination and the beginning of equality and equity for women in all areas of life.

by Miriam Reidy

NGO involvement in UN conferences has been growing over the years since 1975. With over 30,000 participants, representing some 3,200 NGOs, the parallel NGO Forum 95 in Beijing was the largest international civil society gathering the world has seen in this century.

Moreover since the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil, NGO representatives have moved from being observers and lobbyists to a role as participants in the process, either as members of national delegations or as NGO delegates accredited to the conference.

Running from August 30 to September 8 the NGO Forum 95 offered a full schedule of plenary events and discussions as well as at least 4,000 separate workshops around 12 principal themes. These were: economy, governance and politics, human and legal rights, peace and human security, education, health, environment, spirituality and religion, science and technology, media, art and culture, and race and ethnicity.

mariette grange / wcc

Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Agnelli (far left), meets NGO representatives at the Forum in Beijing.

Bringing back the voices

The World Council of Churches expressed its commitment to women by sending a delegation to the 1985 NGO Forum in Nairobi where it conducted a series of workshops, engaged in advocacy with government representatives, and provided a space where Christian women could meet for sharing experiences and strategizing together.

The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998) was launched as a follow-up to the UN Decade for Women which ended at Nairobi. Thus, as the former draws to a close, it was appropriate that the WCC once again participate in the UN conference and the NGO forum with the aim of listening and contributing to the voices and concerns of women, and bringing these back to the churches.

The WCC is an accredited NGO to the United Nations and its official delegation to the intergovernmental meeting led by Janice Love (Methodist, USA) and composed of Omega Bula (United Church, Zambia), Christina Bösenberg (Lutheran, Argentina), Liliana Andronescu (Orthodox, Romania), and Aruna Gnanadason (Church of South India, India) went with an official statement. This was submitted as a written intervention and released to the press.

The statement (see pages 34 and 35) emphasizes issues of economic justice, racism and migrant women, and the liberative power of religion all issues which were less prominent than they might have been in the debate over the Platform of Action. It calls on governments to keep to the commitments they made at the Social Summit in Copenhagen.

By its presence at the FWCW the WCC delegation provided space for Christian women to gather and network. The intervention was signed by 18 other ecumenical groups who were presented at Beijing.

Alongside its direct participation in the inter-governmental meeting the WCC facilitated the presence at the NGO Forum of some 60 women from around the world. Together with 9 staff these women animated a series of WCC workshops on:

- Women and the Economy: The Impact of the Debt Crisis and Structural Adjustment Programmes on Women;
- Women under Racism;
- Women and Health and the Challenge of HIV/AIDS;
- Young Women Demand a Violence-Free World;
- Women, Religion and Culture: Christian Perspectives;
- Gospel, Cultures and Women;
- Networking for Action in Solidarity with Migrant Women.

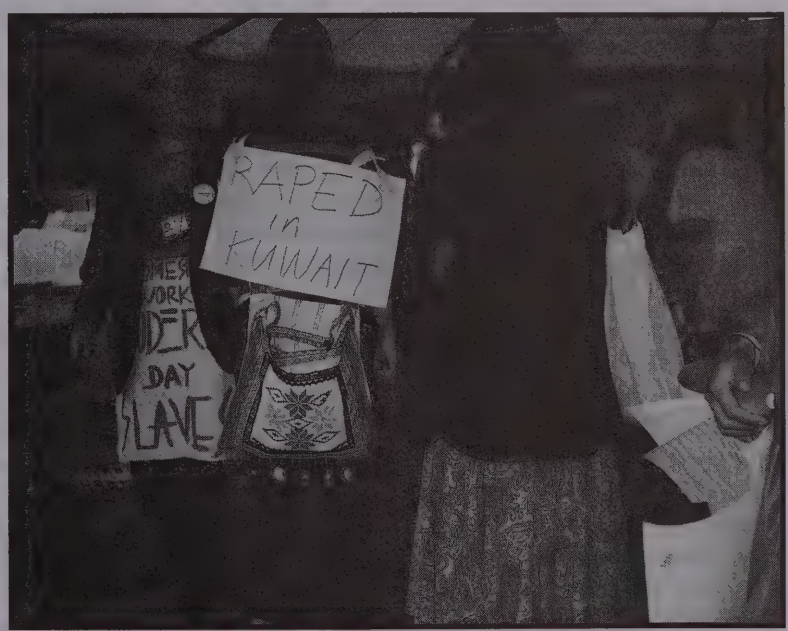
The enthusiastic participation of large audiences at the workshops testified to the relevance of these issues for NGO representatives in general and their interest in Christian/ecumenical perspectives on them; the workshops also attracted many Christian women attending the forum on behalf of their own church or NGO groups.

The WCC presence was perhaps particularly important as an opportunity to counter what many in the WCC group experienced as a negative view of religion prevailing at the forum. A strong concern about religious extremism was expressed in a wide variety of workshops and demonstrations. That religion as a whole might be identified with such extremism would have been unfortunate, to put it mildly!

Thus the two WCC workshops focusing on the themes of gospel/religion, cultures and women offered a welcome opportunity to explore the liberative, empowering aspects of religion and Christianity without underplaying the negative, oppressive elements. And the other workshops' demonstration of the WCC's engagement on other fronts in support of "equality, development and peace" for women was further eloquent testimony to the liberative elements in the gospel.

Two other aspects of the WCC presence in Beijing deserve mention. The council was part of the wider ecumenical presence called Ecumenical Women United. An ad hoc group of eight world organisations of Christian women, EWU conducted five workshops, one of which, on "Appropriating our language: Women's language, others' agenda" was facilitated by the WCC. But its effort to offer a space for Christian worship and personal sharing was largely frustrated.

Also significant was the WCC group's close contact with the China Christian Council and its Women's Commission and, through it, with Christian women around the country. The WCC's presence in Beijing was facilitated through the tireless efforts of the CCC Women's Commission whose work began well before our arrival. Warm contacts continued throughout our stay during a dinner hosted by CCC women, another by the Chinese government's Minister of Religious Affairs, and on numerous informal occasions. Together we visited the Chong Wen Men church, and our Chinese sisters told us that our presence had brought them strength, inspiration and renewal; the feeling was mutual!



mariette grange / wcc

Migrant women activists prepare for a solidarity march at the NGO Forum in Beijing.

Was it worth it?

What were the benefits of and limits to the WCC presence in Beijing? The international media made much of the practical and political difficulties that plagued the NGO Forum in particular, and we were not exempt from those! Despite repeated requests EWU was denied appropriate space for meditation and worship. Two WCC workshops on HIV/AIDS were cancelled because of the likelihood that panellists with HIV/AIDS would be refused visas due to recent Chinese legislation.

In spite of their massive numbers, the more than 30,000 women representing some 3,000 NGOs at the forum were "marginalised", according to the WCC's Women's Programme coordinator Aruna Gnanadason. The last-minute shift to a location some 60 km from Beijing was not so much a logistical problem as a psychological one, since "it clearly divided us from the UN meeting", she said.

"The latter was an intergovernmental meeting with little space for NGOs to speak. They used NGO commitment to draft the Platform of Action for them, with NGO representatives often working through the night. Then governments would appropriate what they had written. This was an abuse of the women's movement. And much of the Platform is addressed to civil society to follow up."

Whether or not the difficulties were part of a deliberate attempt to discourage NGOs is not clear. But we feel that, as the secretary-general of the Beijing Conference Gertrude Mongella suggested, "Beijing was not about China, it was about women!" Asked if she expected a positive effect on women's lives from the FWCW and the NGO Forum, Janice Love noted that women have made "substantial gains in certain areas" over the past period – "so much so that there are severe reactions against those gains" in certain quarters.

WCC intervention at the fourth UN World Conference

Madam President,

The World Council of Churches is joined in this statement by other global ecumenical organisations as well as a number of religious bodies present at the fourth World Conference on Women, all of which are listed at the end of the document.

The World Council of Churches is grateful to the members of the Preparatory Committee and the Secretary General for having ensured that this important gathering is being held and that it provides a comprehensive global agenda on issues relating to the life and livelihood of the women of the world. With 324 member churches of the Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Christian traditions, located in every region of the world, the World Council of Churches is aware that these questions are urgent and complex. Only an approach that will link the empowerment of women with ensuring the quality of life for all citizens can offer hope to the millions of women in our world who are struggling for survival and dignity.

In 1988 the World Council of Churches had launched a Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, as a follow-up of the UN Decade for Women. This programme has brought the WCC in close contact with the everyday lives of women and we have documented evidence of the various forms of violence women experience and the extent of this violence. It has been painful for us to acknowledge that institutions which should stand in solidarity with women, including governments and the churches, have not often responded with resolute action. We encounter, through our contact with women at the periphery of all our societies, the struggle for dignity and livelihood that women engage in every day.

One cause for the increase in incidents of violence against women is the global economic insecurity in which our families and societies exist. We believe that empowerment is not possible as long as women live in contexts of violence, often exacerbated by cultural and religious traditions. At Vienna it was acknowledged that women's rights are human rights we urge the immediate introduction of legal and institutional instruments to protect the human rights of women. Our particular concern is focused on the rights of migrant and refugee women, of women living under the yoke of racism and on the situation of Indigenous women who are often the targets of vicious violence.

The World Council of Churches comes to this World Conference to lift up the voices of those women who are often ignored. We believe that economic, political and social justice are pre-requisites for the empowerment of women. Contrary to the widely held development ideology which emphasises that economic growth alone and by itself can improve the quality of life, we support and wish to raise here the views emphasized at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, according to which people should be at the centre of development. We also endorse the position taken in Copenhagen that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is the main objective of development, and its principal resource.

Many in the member churches of the WCC will testify that the effects of foreign debts and structural adjustment programmes erode the traditional occupations and livelihood of women and result in in-

For Love, "holding the conference was important to confirm that women's perspectives and gifts are on the UN agenda to stay. In spite of the shortcomings, the UN made a commitment and we will see some international norms and standards that will be improved."

Other positive outcomes will result from" the connections women made with each other. So coming together was not just a show. It was an opportunity to reconfirm our commitment and say there is no going back."

Gnanadason suggested that Beijing, compared to other world conferences, established that women do have a common agenda. "There was more interaction between women from north and south even at the other UN conferences. Most women were concerned that the economic issues were underplayed, and it was clear that the crime of violence against women is a global phenomenon," she said.

As WCC, we were present in Beijing with and for the women of the world. We found that our concerns and themes are shared by other women, and were able to convey our own specific perspective as Christian women. We return strengthened and inspired by the dedication, determination and enthusiasm of 50,000 women to continue to work to change the world for the better, for equality, development and peace for all women. The sheer number and the vigour of NGO voices in Beijing will put increasing pressure on world leaders to demonstrate genuine commitment to action on the women's agenda.

Note: *For a fuller description of the FWCW and Forum '95 as well as of the WCC's workshops and presence there, look out for the November issue of ONE WORLD.*

Miriam Reidy is editorial assistant for "ONE WORLD", the WCC magazine.

---

creasing poverty and marginalization of women both in rural and urban settings. Echoing again the World Summit on Social Development, we emphasize that structural adjustment programmes should be restructured to include social development goals, that they should include gender-sensitive social impact assessments. It should also be ensured that women do not have to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of the transition costs. We would add that in order to promote equality in all societies, it is important that steps are taken to recognize, count and value unwaged work still typically women's labour, in the home and in the community.

Of equal concern is the fact that women seem increasingly to be at the centre of the AIDS epidemic and more and more women are infected with the virus. The spread of HIV/AIDS is as much related to poverty and the subordinate status of women, as it is to the virus itself. We urge that more attention and resources be devoted to the care of people living with HIV/AIDS and its prevention, particularly in the context of the in-built gender discrimination in health care programmes. Governments should also ensure that women do not carry the entire burden for care of people living with HIV/AIDS.

We draw to the attention of the world community the liberating power of religions and we affirm the positive and supportive role that the churches and other religious institutions can play in standing in solidarity with those women who have to make ethical choices and decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive rights. But of equal concern to the World Council of Churches is the increasing religious extremism in all faiths and the deleterious consequences this has on women's legal, political and social rights.

We remind our governments of all previous commitments made which are still far from implementation and are not even ratified by some governments. International instruments are sometimes not implemented because they do not respond to specific cultural and developmental needs. We therefore urge for more regional and national commitments and strategies that can be more realistically implemented.

We urge that special funding instruments be set up at the local, national and international levels so as to ensure enough resources to implement decisions made at this gathering for the empowerment of women.

As the World Council of Churches, through our member churches, we commit ourselves to monitoring the implementation of commitments made here in Beijing, to the women of the world.

Thank you.

The statement is endorsed by the following churches and organizations convened at an Ecumenical Gathering called by the WCC, September 4, 1995 during the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing:

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst (AG KED)
Center of Concern
Council of Churches in the Netherlands
Church of Scotland Woman's Guild
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
Mujeres para el dialogo, Mexico
National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Church World Service
Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland (NEWS)
Presbyterian Church USA, National Ministries Division
Sisters of St. Agnes, Fond du Lac, USA
Sisters of the Mercy of the Americas, Silver Spring, USA
Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, USA
United Church of Christ USA, Board for World Ministries, Coordinating Center for Women, Office for Church in Society
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
World Conference on Religion and Peace
World Federation of Methodist Women

Programme Unit III and the Central Committee

The WCC Central Committee held its 46th meeting in Geneva from 14-22 September this year. On its agenda were several issues related to the work of Unit III.

Programme to Overcome Violence

In its call eighteen months earlier for a programme to "challenge and transform the global culture of violence in the direction of a culture of just peace", the Central Committee was responding to an appeal issued by Southern African Methodist bishop Stanley Mogoba in his sermon at the opening worship of that meeting. Mogoba had praised the leading role taken by the WCC, through its often-controversial Programme to Combat Racism, in the international struggle against apartheid. Under present circumstances, he suggested, a similar initiative was needed against the rising tide of violence worldwide. Subsequently, it was decided that the WCC establish a Programme to Overcome Violence. After an open hearing on this programme was held, the Central Committee recommended that the programme be given "sufficient staff and resources to carry out its mandate".

Racism

The keynote speaker at the plenary on racism was former South African Council of Churches general secretary Frank Chikane. He urged the WCC to remain firm in its stand for racial justice around the world. A "framework document" identifying new phases in the ecumenical struggle against racism following the end of apartheid — the major focus of WCC anti-racism work for 25 years — was received as a basis for continued discussion in the churches, looking ahead to an eventual statement by the Central Committee in 1997. In addition to the "globalization" of racism through international economic structures, the document calls for particular attention to "covert racism", including environmental racism (depletion of natural resources and dumping of toxic wastes in areas where racially oppressed groups live).

Global Governance

Former Central Committee moderator M.M. Thomas and Brazilian Presbyterian Rubem César Fernandes addressed a plenary session on global governance, held in connection with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Thomas said the churches should "look at the problem of humanizing the structures of global governance"; Fernandes described the work of a citizens' group in Rio de Janeiro as a local model for grassroots participation in the world's power structures. Later, the Central Committee adopted a memorandum on the UN, reaffirming WCC support for the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and calling for continued WCC collaboration with UN agencies. The text also voices "deep concern about trends in the UN which have diverted it from aspirations expressed in the Preamble to the Charter" and calls for a comprehensive review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council.

The document on WCC relations with the United Nations emphasizes that the Council has its own agenda and that, insofar as this coincides with the UN agenda, the WCC should work with and through the UN system according to clear priorities. The plenary discussion revealed some of the tensions between a desire to relate selectively to UN and yet not be restricted to a purely nongovernmental organization (NGO) role. Raiser explained that a debate on the role of NGOs is currently taking place within the UN, and this memorandum was prepared in anticipation of possible pressure from the UN side.

Sanctions

Also commended to the churches for study were a text setting forth criteria for the legitimacy of applying sanctions against states engaged in "gross and systematic violations of accepted international standards of conduct".

The memorandum on sanctions suggests that these are "by definition coercive", "tend not to distinguish between those responsible for perpetrating an unlawful act and innocent victims", are difficult to enforce, and "have not always been consistent, impartial or effective". It further warns that while they have typically been regarded by churches as peaceful and nonviolent alternatives to war, "experience has revealed" that sanctions "may contribute to violence, widespread suffering and the escalation of conflict".

Receiving the memorandum, the Committee amended it to refer to the tendency of sanctions to inflict additional suffering on affected populations, the need for churches to consult one another when sanctions are being considered, and

recommending application only after all other less coercive measures are exhausted.

Population and Development

The study document on "The Churches, Population and Development: Cairo and Beyond" was prepared by a WCC delegation after its return from the UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in September 1994. It constitutes an invitation to the churches to debate the ethical and theological principles involved in issues of population, development, environment and sexual and reproductive rights.

EDCS

In a Friday morning plenary session devoted to the work of Unit III - Justice, Peace and Creation, the World Council of Churches Central Committee approved a recommendation to increase the Council's investments in the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS) to 5 percent as of March next year, and to 10 percent by the year 2000.

Created by the WCC 20 years ago to challenge churches to "put their... money where their mouth is", EDCS has attracted only a very small percentage of the Council's own total investment; and the Unit III committee said this lack of commitment by "the parent of EDCS" has put the credibility of the WCC at stake.

General secretary Konrad Raiser called the decision to increase WCC commitment to EDCS "a major breakthrough". The recommendation was also welcomed by EDCS general manager G.H.O. van Maanen, who cited EDCS as an example where the voice of the churches is heard and affects the lives of tens of thousands of poor and marginalized people.

Festival

The Central Committee has approved the planning and organisation of five days of celebratory events: A FESTIVAL to mark the end of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, FOR A NEW BEGINNING.

The Festival is intended to provide a space for the thousands of women who have been the backbone of the Decade, and who have urged their churches to reflect and act accordingly. The Decade team Visits have established that it is women who have kept the Decade going.

The Festival will offer a space to worship, discuss, reflect theologically and celebrate their struggles and commitment to the churches. It will allow space for dreaming as well as concrete planing of what they would want happening beyond 1998.

The Festival will be preceded or followed by carefully planned exposure/solidarity visits to women in other African nations.

This event will take place before the Assembly so as to enable delegates and non-delegates from the world to participate. Churches are encouraged to contribute financially to the Festival as a mark of solidarity. The WCC Central Committee also recommended that national celebrations be held throughout 1998 and that a Sunday be set aside for Special Worship Service to mark end of the Decade in 1998.

Nuclear tests

The WCC Assembly in 1983 stated that churches should declare the production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons "a crime against humanity" an it further said that "the logic and practice of nuclear deterrence has no place in God's design for a peaceful world and for the integrity of creation". In line with this view, the Central Committee condemned nuclear weapons tests by China and France. A statement was adopted which calls on China and France to halt all nuclear testing and to join the moratorium on such tests announced by other nuclear-weapons states until adoption of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The French test, it notes, was carried out "far from the shores of Metropolitan France, without consultation with the Territorial Assembly of French Polynesia... and in defiance of worldwide official and popular protests", including those by church bodies, among them the Council of Christian Churches in France.

Following the adoption of this statement, the Central Committee decided to march to the United Nations' building in Geneva. His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church and moderator of the Central Committee, handed Petrovsky, Director General of the UN's Geneva office, a letter expressing the committee's "particular concern about the continuation of nuclear tests on Moruroa Atoll by the Government of France." Aram I urged that the UN Secretary General use his good offices "to draw to the attention of the government of France to its moral obligation, especially in view of the express will of the people of French Polynesia and the wider Pacific region..., to desist from any further nuclear tests". While the WCC delegation met with the UN officials, a prayer meeting was held in front of the UN building.

Source: WCC Press Statements (except for the report on the Women's Festival)

Pleased to M Yo

PCR TEAM

In the back row, left to right:

Rev. Bob Scott, from Aotearoa-New Zealand, executive secretary working on issues in Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

Ms Monica Grob, from Switzerland, administrative assistant to Marilia Schüller.

Ms Marilia Schüller, from Brasil, executive secretary working on issues in South America and Women under Racism.

In the middle row, from left to right:

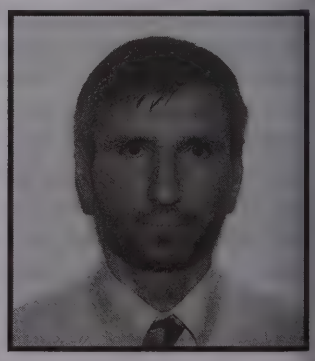
Dr Deborah Robinson, from the USA, executive secretary working on North America and Africa.

Ms Rebecca Metaxa, from the U.K., administrative assistant to Deborah Robinson.

Ms Marina Biarge Rosales, from Spain, administrative assistant to Eugenio Poma who was introduced to our readers in the last issue.

In the front:

Ms Salomey Barth-Dadieh, from Ghana, administrative assistant to Bob Scott.



NEW YORK OFFICE

Rev. Rainer Lingscheid, from Germany, executive secretary in the WCC/CCIA Unit III Office in New York.

PUBLICATIONS of INTEREST

A PEOPLE'S GUIDEBOOK TO THE ENVIRONMENT

by Mary Antonette A. Beroya.

"The environmental challenge has become a preeminent one, not only for those directly engaged with the environment or even with organizations involved in international development, but most especially for peoples whose threatened environment has become a life or death struggle. While environmental destruction can be primarily responsible in bringing, with drama and passion, to international prominence such issues, events and struggles of people, multidisciplinary concerns have also contributed, like tributaries to a swelling stream of environmental language. Such a situation cannot but create some turbulence from which ensure some fundamental problems of language and meaning. This, in turn, can lead to disagreements of diagnosis, policy preference and values assessments.

All the more, in the face of an urgent situation, efforts should be made to increase common understanding so as to forge universal solidarity to resolve the environmental crisis.

This book hopes to contribute towards achieving that goal.

While this book is meant to be a dictionary of environmental terms, the scope and complexity of the issue of the environment demand that other terms dealing with the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of peoples be included, whenever appropriate. Other distinguishing features of this work are that examples and experiences are mostly Asian and, more important, the viewpoint is from the marginalized and struggling people. The inclusion of terms particularly relevant to church people has also been deliberate. This dictionary will be handy not only for those beginning to be concerned but for those already in the field who need a practical system for reference and/or for instruction."

Copies can be obtained from:

Documentation for Action Groups in Asia (DAGA)
CCA Centre, Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin road
Shatin, N.T. Hong Kong
Phone: (852) 2697 1917 Fax: (852) 2697 1912
E-mail: daga@asiaonline.net

THE FUTURE OF WORK IN EUROPE

by Aart van den Berg

How can the twin problem of unemployment and social exclusion be tackled creatively?

This original publication from the Work and Economy Network in the European Churches (WEN) attempts to address the question by analysing current responses from grass roots organisation in West, Central and East Europe and from European policy-makers. It also appraises the 'critical voices', with particular reference to contributions from the churches towards the development of alternative paradigms and possibilities for the future of employment and the economy. For, as the author points out, "to leave the economy to the economists is a road which we cannot travel".

The future of Work in Europe is a valuable resource for all concerned with rising inequality in Europe, and who are seeking inspiration and pointers to a way forward. It draws to a close the action/research programme developed toward the 1994 WEN consultation, "Regions Under the Market", and launches a new programme on the future of work.

Copies at £3.50 for Britain and £4.00 for other countries, can be ordered from:

the Work and Economy Network in the European Churches (WEN)
The William Temple Foundation
Manchester Business School
Manchester M15 6PB, U.K.
Tel: +44-161-275 6534
Fax: +44-161-272 8663
E-Mail: ECG-WEN@MCR1.poptel.org.uk

PUBLICATIONS of INTEREST

VALUES AND VISIONS
ENCOURAGING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS

The Values and Visions Project is based at the Development Education Project in Manchester.
Values and Visions has its roots in the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation initiative of the World Council of Churches, but is used by teachers of all faiths and no faiths.

The Project has produced its initial Guidelines (which are now on sale at £10,00 including P&P) and as well as ongoing research, is running INSET days for schools and others and working with whole school staffs to explore how they are best able to sue their values and visions to provide a firm base from which to explore the curriculum.
The Project is concerned with the building of community within our schools and with spiritual development, drawing on the wisdom of many faith traditions. Values and Visions is committed to exploring global awareness is schools giving particular attention to responding to Southern voices.

Schools are using the materials produced so far to help them develop policies and practical activities to assist with spiritual and moral development and to influence the ethos of the school. Some schools see the Project as guiding their preparation for OFSTED Inspection.

The Project starts from the "here and now" in schools, so it is not intended to be a remote theoretical model rather it attempts to help schools address the issues facing them at the present moment. This might be concerned with playground activities and behaviour, listening skills throughout the school or developing stillness, global awareness and self-esteem. Values and Visions is not just seen as a religious education activity, but influences work across the curriculum without being yet another layer of work to be undertaken.

Values and Visions has already worked with schools in urban and rural settings, church and county schools, schools with predominantly Muslim children and also with members of the Jewish community. Courses have also been run for Christian Aid staff and the education team of an Anglican Diocese.
The Guidelines will be published in their final form in early 1996.

For copies of the Initial Guidelines or details of INSET opportunities contact:

Georgeanne Lamont, Values and Visions, Development Education Project, c/o Manchester Metropolitan University, 801 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2QR, U.K.

SILENT REVOLUTION
THE RISE OF MARKET ECONOMICS IN LATIN AMERICA

by Duncan Green

At the annual meeting of the World Bank and IMF from 10-12 October, Latin America was held up as a shining example of the merits of free market reform and sound economic policy.

Launched to coincide with the meeting, Silent Revolution: The Rise of Market Economics in Latin America reveals the darker side in the human and economic damage caused by the Bank's 'structural adjustment' policies in the region.

Since 1982, the debt crisis and structural adjustment have triggered a profound, but almost unnoticed, economic revolution. Formerly protectionist economies from Argentina to Mexico are turning to the free market, privatization, foreign investment and exports to provide growth and prosperity.

The model has brought modest macro-economic success in the shape of low inflation and sluggish growth, but at huge social cost. Sixty million Latin Americans have joined the ranks of the poor, millions of steady jobs have disappeared, education and health services have been cut to the bone.

In Silent Revolution, Duncan Green traces the roots of this transformation in the changing global economy and the growing influence of the IMF and the World Bank, and follows the search for new popular alternatives to what has become an economic model enshrined as 'common sense' by Latin America's ruling élite.

Travelling across the region, Duncan Green charts the human impact of such changes. Interviewing everyone from Chilean fruit pickers to Mexican stock brokers, he demystifies the issues, bringing them back to the daily struggle for survival of a 'structurally adjusted' continent.

Paperback: ISBN 0 304 33456 1 Hardback: 0 304 33455 3
Cassell PLC, Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB
Tel: 0171 420 5555, Fax: 0171 240 7261

PUBLICATIONS of INTEREST

A PLACE IN CREATION

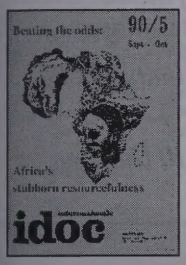
by David G. Hallman

Is there hope for the future of the Earth? David Hallman answers with a resounding yes.

Hallman explores exciting new concepts in the fields of science, religion and economics; concepts that have the power to transform our understanding of our relationship to the rest of Creation. He reveals how intrinsically connected humans are to the whole ecosystem; how God wills a harmonious relationship between ourselves and the rest of Creation; and how our economy could be restructured to function in a less destructive relationship with the environment. Finally, he assesses political realities that could constrain or facilitate movement towards a more sustainable type of society.

David Hallman works for the United Church of Canada on energy and environmental issues. He has served on the Canadian Participatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and is active as a resource person for the World Council of Churches. He is the author of Caring for Creation. In this new book, A Place in Creation, Hallman empowers the reader in the vast and vital mission to save this planet and leads us from despair to hope in a future of our choosing.

ISBN 0-919000-80-0
The United Church Publishing House, 85 St Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, MGT 1M8 Canada



TAKE OUT A SUBSCRIPTION TO IDOC INTERNAZIONALE AND SUPPORT A JOURNAL WHICH SPEAKS THE LANGUAGE OF MULTICULTURE

idoc internazionale is an English language quarterly journal. Its aim is to give the opportunity to know what people in the Third World countries are thinking and publishing on the crucial issues affecting their lives. In recent years it has expanded its range of topics that include the processes of democratisation, communication, multi-racial society, women's role, human migration, dialogue of religions, racism and ethnic conflicts.

Price: US$ 30 (surface); US$ 40 (airmail); Italy Lit 30.000
Address: Via S. Maria dell' Anima, 30-00186 Rome, Italy
Tel: 0039-6-6868332; Fax: 6832766
E-mail: idoc@gn.apc.org

Copies of ECHOES can be ordered from the Unit III publications office at the WCC. The average cost of producing and mailing ECHOES is of SFr 5.- (equivalent to US$ 3.00) per copy. Readers who can afford it are strongly encouraged to contribute. However, **please note** that any contributions under SFr 20.- (US$ 15.00) actually costs us more to cash than it is worth.

Individuals willing to express their commitment to the Unit III for Justice, Peace and Creation may also contribute in the same way.

Please make payment either by cheque in the name of the WCC or to the following bank accounts with a very clear mention that it is for ECHOES magazine, Unit III:

Postal cheque account
Compte de chèques postaux
No 12-572-3
Genève - Suisse

Union des Banques Suisses UBS
C. P.
1211 GENEVE 2
Suisse
Account No. 6951 49.00A

Schröder, Münchmeyer Hengst & Co.
Friedensstrasse 6-10
Postfach 4387
6000 FRANKFURT
Deutschland
Konto Nr. 00-828848-00

Algemene Bank Nederland NV
Vijzelstraat 68-78
P.O. Box 407
1000 AK AMSTERDAM
Netherlands
Account No. 54 03 55 313

Lloyds Bank Plc
39 Threadneedle Street
P.O. Box 217
LONDON EC3P 3BT - U.K.
Account No. 1101875 (£ sterling)

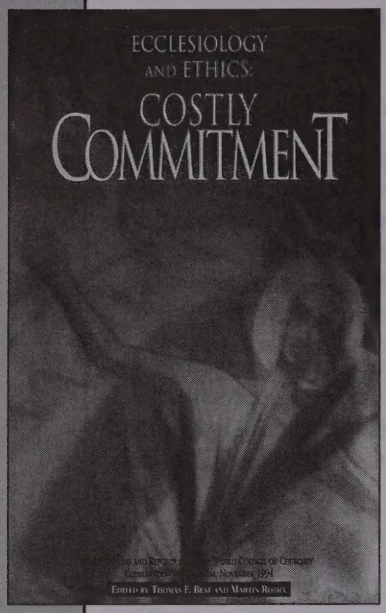
The Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken
Box 40085
S. 10640 STOCKHOLM
Sweden
Account No. 99 5277-10 002 53

Bankers Trust Company
1, Bankers Trust Plaza
130, Liberty St, 21st floor
P.O. Box 318
Church St Station
New York, NY 10015
USA
Account No. 04-814-909

Toronto Dominion Bank
Toronto Dominion Centre Branch
55 King Street w. & Bay Street
TORONTO, Ontario M5K 1A2,
Canada
Account No. 0690-0988974

artwork heading by Centre for Research and Popular Education

UNIT III PUBLICATIONS



ECCLESIOLOGY AND ETHICS
COSTLY COMMITMENT

Presentations and Reports from the World Council of Churches' (WCC) consultation in Jerusalem, November 1994. Edited by Martin Robra and Thomas F. Best.

This book includes the papers and report from an important ecumenical meeting between theologians and ethicists. Continuing the discussion begun in the path-breaking text Costly Unity, it explores the relation between ecclesiology and ethics, between what the church is, and what the church does in responding to the problems and issues facing our world today.

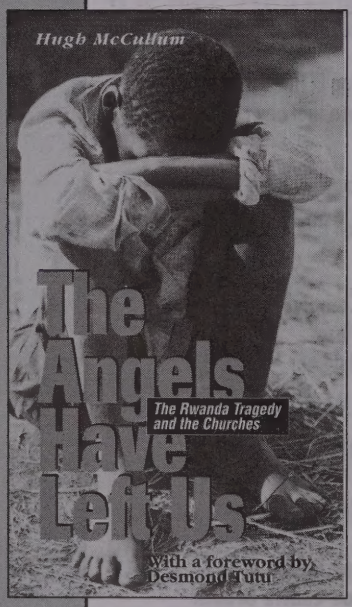
This book surveys the continuing efforts to relate koinonia and issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, including the discussions at the fifth world conference on Faith and Order. It makes available recent ecumenical reflection on topics such as hope and memory as bases of the Christian life; the relation of movements and action groups to the structures of the church; the relation of eucharist, covenant and ethical engagement; and the church as "moral community" and the role of moral formation in the life of the church. It also offers fresh perspectives on the role of Christian worship as a resource for ethical engagement.

The contributors represent a wide variety of theological, ethical and confessional perspectives. They include Emilio Castro, Emmanuel Clapsis, Duncan Forrester, Williams Henn, O.S.B. Peter Lodberg, and Larry Rasmussen.

Rev. Dr Thomas F. Best is an executive secretary in the programme on Faith and Order, Unit I (Unity and Renewal) of the WCC.

Rev. Dr Martin Robra is an executive secretary for the ECOS/Theology of Life programme, Unit III (Justice, Peace and Creation) of the WCC.

WCC PUBLICATIONS



THE ANGELS HAVE LEFT US
THE RWANDA TRAGEDY AND THE CHURCHES

by Hugh McCullum

With a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"We will never come back to this church. It is a graveyard. The angels have left us." Those heart-rending words come from a 16-year-old Rwandese woman who managed to survive one of the massacres that decimated her country in 1994. Her voice is among the many that speak in this vivid and disturbing account of one of the most horrifying episodes of our violent age. Based on hundreds of interviews in Rwanda and elsewhere with government, military and United Nations officials, pastors and church leaders, survivors, refugees and displaced people, this book focuses on the part played in these events by churches in Rwanda, throughout Africa and around the world. The author analyses the roots of the tragedy, looks at the future of a shattered church in a shattered country and poses hard questions about what the church and the ecumenical family should do in a world where poverty, oppression and hated are creating many potential Rwandas.

2-8254-1154-X, paperback, 140pp., Sfr.15.-, US$12.50, £7.75
Risk Book Series
For North America: Africa World Press Inc., Lawrenceville, NJ, USA

WCC Publications
150, route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

Telephone (41-22) 791.6111(WCC)
(41-22) 791.6178 or 6379
Fax (41-22) 798.1346

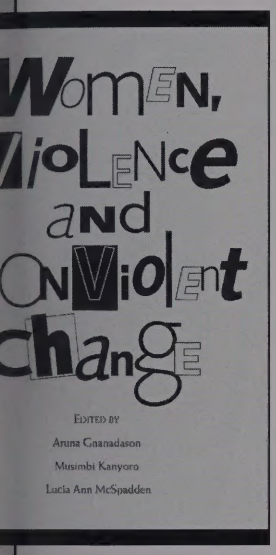
WCC PUBLICATIONS

FACING OUR DIFFERENCES
THE CHURCHES AND THEIR GAY AND LESBIAN MEMBERS

by Alan A. Brash

Few issues in recent years have caused as much controversy in so many churches as homosexuality. The difficulty of these debates has perhaps made the churches reluctant to place this issue on the ecumenical agenda. Yet an essential vocation of the ecumenical movement is to enable a dialogue among the churches at precisely those points where their differences of conviction are sharpest. In this book Alan A. Brash seeks to encourage just such a dialogue on homosexuality, drawing on both his experiences in a local congregation in Aotearoa-New Zealand and his familiarity with churches around the world after a long career of international ecumenical service. Brash points the way towards respectful mutual understanding of divergent interpretations of the Bible, theology and ethics in order to help Christians to reflect on their own convictions and to face together a sensitive topic which has profound consequences for the lives of many people and for the unity of the church of Jesus Christ.

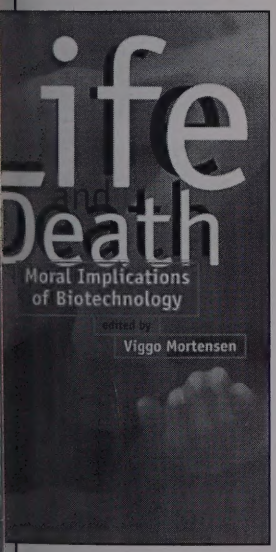
2-8254-1165-5, paperback, 88pp.,
approx. SFr.9.95, US$7.95, £5.25
Risk Book Series



WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENT CHANGE
edited by Aruna Gnanadason, Musimbi Kanyoro and Lucia Ann McSpadden

While there is much talk about "conflict resolution" in our increasingly violent world, relatively little attention has been given to the specific contributions – often very creative and effective – that women are making in this area. Growing out of a study organized by the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and the Life and Peace Institute (Uppsala), this collection of analytical essays and case studies helps to fill that gap. The rich variety of approaches described (from women in Australia, Canada, India, Kenya, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Vietnam) range from the political to the educational to the pastoral. What they have in common is an awareness of the interlinkages of various forms of violence, an emphasis on practical action and a deliberate choice for nonviolence as the only appropriate and workable strategy of response to violence.

2-8254-1169-8, paperback, approx. 192pp.,
approx. SFr.22.50, US$17.90, £11.90



LIFE AND DEATH
MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

edited by Viggo Mortensen

As rapid technological developments in human genetics turn yesterday's science fiction into today's scientific possibility, complex and difficult new questions are being raised for Christian ethics. Churches have only begun to discuss these questions; and this book grows out of reflection on bio-ethical issues in a working group of the Nordic Lutheran churches. After introducing four major areas in which ethical problems are raised – reproductive technology, prenatal diagnosis, genetic screening and euthanasia – the authors outline an ethical approach to biotechnology that draws broadly on the Lutheran tradition, highlighting such theological issues as creation and fall, justification, love for the neighbour, the Christian in the world, culture and the limits of ethics. A concluding chapter brings specific bioethical issues down-to-earth in the form of eight fictitious letters written by thoughtful Christians on such subjects as childlessness, death and dying and human gene research.

2-8254-1170-1, paperback, approx. 120pp.,
approx. SFr.15.-, US$11.50, £7.95
Published for the Lutheran World Federation Department of Studies

Len's Place

by Len M